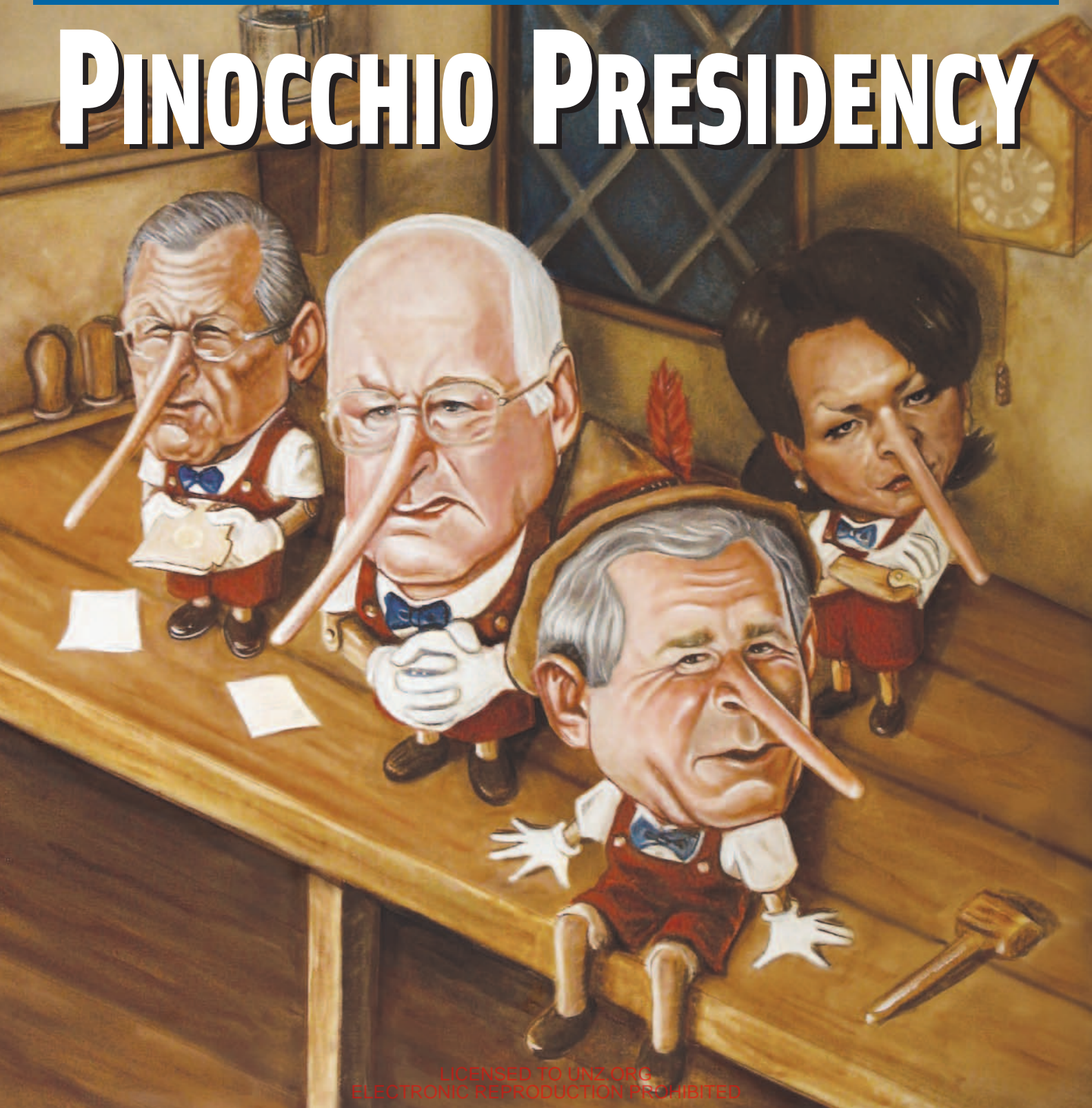


PATRICK J. BUCHANAN: THE PASSION AND ITS ENEMIES

APRIL 26, 2004

# The American Conservative

## PINOCCHIO PRESIDENCY



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## BAD FAITH

After reading the article “American Creed” (April 12), now I know what is wrong with America. Protestantism! Radical individualism! The rejection of community! Of course along with individualism ultimately come egalitarianism and relativism.

Protestantism is a transitional phase between Christianity and secularism. Mainline Protestantism has rejected orthodoxy in favor of a subjective relationship and understanding of God. Ultimately the rest of Protestantism will give way to abortion and sodomy as it has given way to birth control and divorce. How did this Harvard professor come to write an article in *The American Conservative*?

HAROLD CREWS  
*Walkertown, N.C.*

## PARTY LIFE LINES

Tim Carney presents many good and oft-ignored facts regarding the bonds of single-issue abortion politics to each political party (March 29). Yet there is a critical point that is implied but not fully expressed: namely that the bonds between the pro-choice movement and the Democratic Party are much stronger and more indissoluble than the bonds between the pro-life movement and the Republican Party.

One can see this in the Senate, where only Democrats Ben Nelson (Neb.), soon-to-be retired John Breaux (La.), and Zell Miller (Ga.) have voting records that can be considered pro-life, and all three still voted against various components of the Mexico City policy during their tenure. If Rep. Chris John is elected to replace Breaux, he will become the only Democrat to enter the Senate with a 100 percent career vote rating on pro-life issues.

In contrast, there are several proudly pro-choice senators on the Republican side of the aisle. Last year, nine GOP Senators voted to affirm *Roe v. Wade*—including prominent committee chairmen and members of leadership such as

Ted Stevens (Alaska), John Warner (Va.), Kay Bailey Hutchison (Texas), and the man next in line to chair the Judiciary Committee, Arlen Specter (Penn.). Such clear ideological heresy is consistently tolerated by party leadership, despite its conflict with the “sanctity of every life” doctrine that has guided the Republican Party from its inception.

In the Democratic Party, pro-life opinions are not even acknowledged as legitimate; the treatment Bob Casey Sr. endured is only the most obvious example. But in the GOP, the pro-life movement continues to be powerless to stop pro-choice politicians from attaining leadership roles—and unfortunately, there are no signs that this status will change.

BEN DOMENECH  
*McLean, Va.*

## KERRY'S BRAIN

I was shocked to read the following sentence in Christopher Layne’s “The Next Emperor” (March 29): “Of the serious Democratic contenders, only John Kerry made foreign policy a major focus of his campaign.” Has Mr. Layne heard of Howard Dean? Perhaps Layne doesn’t think that Dean was a “serious” contender, but everyone else thought so. Go back and review the early days of the campaign in the fall of 2003 (the New Mexico debate, for example). Dean was forcefully making a case against the Iraq War while John Kerry sat on the fence. Kerry only began seriously opposing the war when he noticed Dean’s growing popularity. He then stole Dean’s ideas, and his campaign took off. The Democratic nominee is thus a bionic candidate: Howard Dean’s ideas in John Kerry’s body.

BRUCE HAYMAN  
*Cleveland, Ohio*

## The editors respond:

TAC not only recognized Howard Dean as a contender, we credited him for igniting the Democratic antiwar debate. By the time this piece printed, he was no longer

running, and the point was the similarity of Bush and Kerry’s imperial agendas. That said, we could have been clearer.

## SHAKEN NOT STIRRED

With regard to Pat Buchanan’s “Free-Market Molotov” (March 29), the cocktail of democracy and free markets requires a healthy dollop of constitutional prerequisite before it can produce the heady admixture of a stable free society for parched postwar Iraq. Unfortunately, in that sad country there are no Thomas Jeffersons to tend bar. Unless minority rights are protected in law and enshrined as a bedrock principle, it is easy to foresee the possibility of a Shi’ite mullah invoking a majoritarian mandate and imposing a Potemkin village democracy on a fractured and sectarian population. An untried Bill of Rights might not prevent such a catastrophe, but to hold elections without a firm expectation of constitutional safeguard and redress is to invite chaos and leave an inchoate republic foundering.

DAVID LEWIS  
*New York, N.Y.*

## MISSING OPIATES

Please convey my appreciation for “In Praise of Laudanum” (March 29) to its author. I am one of those who self-medicated with opiates and did so for many years. During that time, I was at ease in the world and with myself as well as being a highly successful, wealthy entrepreneur and a warm, loving father whose adult children remember those years with joy and still love their father. Since abstaining from opiates, I have become an impoverished, reclusive, aimless ex-convict. For some of us opiates are the only possible balance.

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CHRIS HIER'S

[ COVER ]

## Pinocchio Presidency

**BY DOUG BANDOW** The Bush administration lied America into war, and the damage to our credibility will be long-lasting and grave. Admitting the truth would help repair the harm. **Page 6**

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**BY PATRICK J. BUCHANAN** The campaign against Mel Gibson's film is the latest front in the Culture War. The target this time: Christianity itself. **Page 13**

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**BY STEVEN GREENHUT** President Bush's ill-advised amnesty plan rouses California Republicans from their post-Proposition 187 stupor. **Page 18**

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[IMMIGRATION]

## HOUSE CALL

Last month, some pro-illegal-alien activists ruined White House advisor Karl Rove's Sunday afternoon, swarming over his Washington property waving signs, chanting slogans, and looking into his windows. The demonstrators were pushing the DREAM Act, a give-away program for "alien minors" that would make it easier for illegal aliens to qualify for state-funded tuition grants. A broader point of the proposal is to wipe out any distinction between legal and illegal immigration, essentially nullifying American immigration laws. (It would work sort of like the amnesty proposed by the Bush administration, reportedly a brainchild of Rove himself.)

But Rove's pro-illegal-alien sentiments reached a limit when faced with a yard invasion of his own home—especially as his children were, quite understandably, upset. He called the Secret Service and the cops and in a brief meeting with demonstrator Emira Palacios said, "Don't ever dare to come back."

In Arizona, ranches are violated by illegal alien smugglers everyday—types far less polite than the demonstrators vying for Rove's attention. It's probably too much to hope, but maybe, just maybe, the incident will help the senior White House advisor reflect on what is being lost by lax border enforcement. (Answer: a country.)

[WORLD]

## GUNSHIP DIPLOMACY

Israel recently "defended itself" by using American Apache gunships to blow up a blind paraplegic being carried from a mosque in a wheelchair. The assassination of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the founder and spiritual leader of Hamas, didn't do much good for Israel's security as tours were cancelled and buses and restaurants lie empty.



What did it do for America's safety? In Iraq, the killing sparked anti-American demonstrations in Mosul and Basra, in the country's north and south. Iraqi Shi'ite leader Ayatollah Sistani, perhaps the most influential man in the country, said, "the occupying Zionist entity committed an ugly crime." Hamas cadres talked about hitting U.S. targets, which they have not done in the past. Throughout the Mideast, U.S. embassies boarded themselves up, as George W. Bush rushed out a statement in support of the murder. At the UN, American diplomats vetoed a Security Council resolution denouncing it.

What does this kind of diplomacy do for America's image in the world? In Pakistan, Osama bin Laden is held in far higher regard than the American president; even in traditionally pro-Western Jordan, large popular majorities now say that suicide attacks against U.S. occupation forces are justified.

Bottom line: the Bush-Sharon alliance is sullyng America's reputation, and the main beneficiaries are Islamic terrorists, who have never been more popular. If Israel felt truly threatened by the blind sheik, it could have simply picked him up and put him on trial. But Sharon may actually prefer to turn his effort to appropriate the West Bank into a cata-

clysmic clash of civilizations. Desire for such a clash is one aim he and bin Laden share.

[POLITICS]

## UNBORN & UNMENTIONABLE

The Unborn Victims of Violence Act, also known as "Laci and Connor's law" after the brutal Peterson murders, sailed through the Senate to reach the president's desk. The legislation doubles the penalty for criminals convicted of injuring or killing a fetus in the course of beating or killing a pregnant woman.

Opponents feared that the logic of the bill—that the fetus is a distinct entity deserving legal protection—would jeopardize legal abortion. To avoid this, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) offered an amendment taking the fetus out of the equation. Anyone who "causes the termination of a pregnancy" would receive a second punishment based on what would have been imposed "had that injury or death occurred to the pregnant woman."

The death or injury of who or what? Denial about the fetus may be a staple of the abortion debate, but it is one that is difficult to square with reality.

Feinstein failed because people of goodwill who disagree about abortion do agree that the fetus is something of

worth in its own right. Slate's William Saletan, no pro-lifer, put it well: "Guess what: There is something very valuable there. And if you can't see it, we can't hear you."

[FAMILY]

## BELIEVE IN FAIRY TALES

Michael and Tonya Hartsell of Wilmington, North Carolina are used to reading fairy tales to their first-grader. When she brought home a book from her school library, they expected the usual chatty animals and whimsical adventures. Enter Prince Bertie, a protagonist in search of a partner—so far so good. Problem is, as the young prince tells his mother, "I've never cared much for princesses." He then meets Princess Madeline and her brother Prince Lee and is smitten—with Lee. *King & King*, recommended for readers aged 4-8, ends with the princes enjoying a "very special" wedding and sharing the usual happily-ever-after kiss.

Asked about the appropriateness of schooling six-year-olds in gay marriage, Freeman Elementary's principal Elizabeth Miars said, "What might be inappropriate for one family, in another family is a totally acceptable thing." The Hartsells disagree and are keeping the book until the school assures them it will not be put back into circulation. There is little they can do about *King & King & Family*, the recently released sequel.

Of the Culture War's long march through American institutions, poet Allen Ginsberg warned with ominous glee, "We will get you through your children." The revolutionaries have succeeded, and from the nursery on up are constructing a new normal: *Publishers Weekly's* review of this "alternatale" comments impassively, "For a visually appealing and more nuanced treatment of diversity in general, Kitty Crowther's recent *Jack and Jim* is a better choice."

[CULTURE]

## FOR "MUSLIM," SIGN "EXPLOSION"?

Call it a sign of the times. Fresh off their success at censoring speech, the language police are now making certain that even the deaf are "culturally appropriate." At a British television station, sign language is being purged of potentially offensive gestures. "Indian," once indicated by pointing to an imaginary dot on the forehead, is replaced by a triangular shape of the subcontinent. (A deaf comedian cracked, "Making the shape of India seems a bit of a challenge, especially if they expand this to other places. New Zealand would be a bit like doing a shadow puppet of a bird.") Other casualties include a limp-wristed "gay" sign, the motion for "Jewish" that suggested a hooked nose, and the sign for "Chinese" that pulled eyes to a slant.

The British Council for the Disabled shot back, "The programme makers at Channel 4 are interfering with deaf people's language, culture and view of society, and that is a form of discrimination." Undeterred, the station is now employing a new Jewish sign miming the shape of a menorah and a Chinese sign that indicates a native tunic. The Jewish deaf community apparently prefers a chin motion indicating a beard (no doubt open to later charges of sexism). As for the Chinese, they remain content to sign "Westerner" by motioning round eyes.

[POSTWAR]

## STOP THE PRESSES

Iraq satrap L. Paul Bremer III has ordered the closure of the Baghdad weekly *Al Hawza*, citing the paper's dissemination of false reports about weapons in Iraq. In Washington, Bill Kristol and the editors of the *Weekly Standard* expressed gratitude for the First Amendment. The *Standard* will continue publishing. ■

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[dying for a lie]

## *Pinocchio Presidency*

The administration has marred its credibility—and America's.

**By Doug Bandow**

"ONCE WE HAVE VICTORY in Baghdad, all the critics will look like fools," Vice President Richard Cheney declared in 2002. Alas, a year after invading Iraq, those looking like fools are concentrated in the administration, which apparently took America into war based on a lie. "We were all wrong," says David Kay, who spent several fruitless months searching for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

It is time for George W. Bush to admit that he, too, was wrong. But this president has proved as unwilling as Bill Clinton to admit a mistake. "There is no doubt in my mind that Saddam Hussein was a grave and gathering threat to America and the world," maintained President Bush, even as he bowed to pressure and promised an investigation into erroneous U.S. intelligence claims.

And Vice President Cheney continues to claim that two trailers discovered after the war were part of a biological weapons program, despite rebuttals by both Kay and the CIA. He also says that the administration has yet to give up hope of finding WMD: "We still don't know the whole extent of what they did have." Similarly, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld says that WMD might still turn up. But Kay calls such hopes

holding out "for a Hail-Mary pass." "I believe we have enough evidence now to say that the intelligence process, and the policy process that used that information, did not work at the level of effectiveness that we require in the age that we live in," he says. So some conservative commentators now call Saddam Hussein himself a WMD.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the administration's failure to find weapons of mass destruction and, equally important, to acknowledge its error. The signature issue for the Bush presidency has been the War on Terror, and the most important aspect of that campaign has been the war in Iraq. Yet far from basking in glory while its opponents looked like fools, the administration now finds its and America's credibility ruined.

At home, a majority of Americans say that they believe the president deliberately exaggerated, or lied about, evidence on Iraq's alleged possession of WMD. The percentage of Americans who see Bush as "honest and trustworthy" has fallen from a high of 71 percent in mid-2002 to 52 percent in February 2004. A Pew survey found the most common description of Bush was "liar." For the first time since the war was won, a majority declared that it was not worth fighting.

Equally significant is the impact on U.S. credibility overseas. "The foreign policy blow-back is pretty serious," says Kenneth Adelman, a member of the Pentagon's Defense Advisory Board who famously predicted that the war would be a "cakewalk." Governments of "Old Europe" feel vindicated in their opposition to us. Former National Security Council Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski writes, "There is manifest resentment of recent American conduct and a pervasive distrust of America's leaders, even in countries that have participated in the coalition in Iraq." UN Secretary General Kofi Annan notes "damage" to U.S. credibility: people "are going to be very suspicious when we try to use intelligence to justify certain actions."

Until the administration decided on war, it proclaimed that Iraq had been contained. In July 2001, NSC Adviser Condoleezza Rice argued, "We are able to keep arms from [Hussein]. His military forces have not been rebuilt." In September of that year, Vice President Cheney declared: "Saddam Hussein is bottled up."

In February 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell declared that sanctions had worked. Saddam Hussein "has not developed any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass



destruction. He is unable to project conventional power against his neighbors.” Similarly, Secretary Powell testified before Congress:

The Iraqi regime militarily remains fairly weak. It does not have the capacity it had 10 or 12 years ago. It has been contained, and even though we have no doubt in our mind that the Iraqi regime is pursuing programs to develop weapons of mass destruction, chemical, biological, and nuclear, I think the best intelligence estimate suggests that they have not been terribly successful.

There is no question that they have some stockpiles of some of these sorts of weapons still under their control. But they have not been able to break out, they have not been able to come out with a capability to deliver these kinds of systems, or to actually have these kinds of systems. That is much beyond where they were 10 years ago. So containment using this arms control sanctions regime I think has been reasonably successful.

That was when facts still mattered to the administration. Once it decided upon war, its position changed. President Bush used last year’s State of the Union speech to paint Iraq as a dire and imminent threat to America. War was necessary, he explained, since “our nation and the world” could “not allow an even greater threat [than North Korea] to rise up in Iraq.” Hussein, said Bush, could develop enough anthrax “to kill several million people.” Iraq had botulinum toxin that could “subject millions of people to death.” Moreover, the Hussein regime “had the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent,” which could “kill untold thousands.” Baghdad possessed chemical munitions, mobile

biological weapons labs, and an earlier nuclear program, and had allegedly attempted to buy “significant quantities of uranium from Africa.”

In a speech delivered in Cincinnati in October 2002, President Bush went further. He claimed, “surveillance photos reveal that the regime is rebuilding facilities that it had used to produce chemical and biological weapons.” Iraq had ballistic missiles “with a likely range of hundreds of miles.” The president warned that not only might Saddam Hussein use such weapons on his neighbors, he might transfer them to terrorists. Indeed, he proclaimed, “Iraq could decide on any given day to provide biological or chemical weapons to a terrorist group or individual terrorists.” Thus, he concluded, “The threat from Iraq stands alone—because it gathers the most serious dangers of our age in one place.”

Finally, in his televised ultimatum when he demanded that Hussein leave Iraq within 48 hours, he asserted, “Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised.” Thus, “The danger is clear: using chemical, biological or, one day, nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill

Secretary of State Powell provided a lengthy bill of particulars in his celebrated presentation to the UN Security Council. “Saddam Hussein could have produced 25,000 liters” of anthrax and had accounted for none of it. “Saddam Hussein has never accounted for vast amounts of chemical weaponry: 550 artillery shells with mustard [gas], 30,000 empty munitions and enough precursors to increase his stockpile to as much as 500 tons of chemical agents.” Powell added that Washington estimated that Iraq had stockpiled “between 100 and 500 tons of chemical weapons agent. That is enough agent to fill 16,000 battlefield rockets.” Secretary Powell also cited unmanned aerial vehicles, which “are well suited for dispensing chemical and biological weapons.” In fact, Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and Rep. Paul E. Kanjorski (D-Penn.) said that the administration claimed in a classified briefing that Iraq could target American cities with UAVs. Secretary Rumsfeld argued that Iraq had “large, unaccounted-for stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons—including VX, sarin, cyclo-sarin, and mustard gas; anthrax, botulism, and possibly smallpox.”

Moreover, the threat was immediate—though administration officials seem to have since forgotten they once said so. On

### **THREE DAYS BEFORE THE U.S. INVADED IRAQ, CHENEY DECLARED, “WE BELIEVE HE HAS, IN FACT, RECONSTITUTED NUCLEAR WEAPONS.”**

their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country or any other.”

These charges were regularly repeated by other administration officials. Three days before the U.S. invaded Iraq, Vice President Cheney declared, “We believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons.”

March 14, Rumsfeld claimed on “Face the Nation,” “critics are the only people I’ve heard use the phrase ‘immediate threat.’ I didn’t. The president didn’t. And it’s become kind of folklore that that’s what happened.” Unfortunately for Rumsfeld, Bob Schieffer and co-interrogator Thomas Friedman were prepared with examples of just such administration claims. In fact, the

administration chorus was overwhelming: no delay was possible. In his Cincinnati speech, Bush explained, "The danger is already significant, and it only grows worse with time. If we know Saddam Hussein has dangerous weapons today—and we do—does it make any sense for the world to wait to confront him?"

When asked in May 2003 whether the U.S. went to war because Iraq's WMD "were a direct and imminent threat to the United States," presidential spokesman Ari Fleischer responded, "Absolutely." Direct and imminent. A year ago, Fleischer's deputy (and current press secretary) Scott McClellan argued that NATO should follow the administration because "this is about imminent threat."

Various officials, from the president on down, declared that the Hussein regime was "a threat," "a significant threat," "the most dangerous threat of our time," "a threat to the region and the world," "a threat to the security of free nations," "a serious threat to our country, to our friends and to our allies," a "unique and urgent threat," and "a serious and mounting threat." Indeed, said Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, "No terrorist state poses a greater or more immediate threat to the security of our people and the stability of the world."

Even in March 2004, NSC Adviser Condoleezza Rice still claimed that the Hussein regime was "the most dangerous regime in the world's most dangerous region," and thus a greater threat than North Korea. When pressed by Tim Russert about the administration's many obviously false claims of imminent danger, Rice responded: "it is an urgent threat and I believe to this day that it was an urgent threat."

Powerful rhetoric. Too bad that none of it was true.

So far, the U.S. has found not one WMD. There were no reconstituted nuclear weapons, no uranium purchases from Africa. The much-cited aluminum

tubes purchased by Iraq were almost certainly intended for use by conventional missiles. Reported David Kay, who ran America's Iraq Survey Group, "information found to date suggests that Iraq's large-scale capability to develop, produce, and fill new CW munitions was reduced—if not entirely destroyed—during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Fox, 13 years of U.N. sanctions, and U.N. inspections." He added, "We have not yet been able to corroborate the existence of a mobile biological weapons production effort." Indeed, "Technical limitations would prevent any of these processes from being ideally suited to these trailers." Nor have any ocean-spanning UAVs turned up. In fact, Kay's search discovered some "contemporary documents" proving that Iraq had destroyed its weapons. His final assessment: "I don't think they [Iraqi WMDs] existed."

A recently released Carnegie Endowment report found that Baghdad's nuclear program had been dismantled and nerve agents "had lost most of their lethality as early as 1991." Any threat from biological weapons would be in the future, not the present. The only

But then, posing a threat to America was not why the administration went to war. Ray McGovern, who chaired the National Intelligence Estimates during his 27-year federal career, notes, "the Bush administration's decision for war against Iraq came well before any intelligence estimate." Instead, intelligence was gathered to support a prior decision. As former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill pointed out, "From the very beginning, there was a conviction that Saddam Hussein was a bad person and that he needed to go." Another official supported O'Neill's account, telling ABC News that at NSC meetings in early 2001 President Bush "told his Pentagon officials to explore the military options, including use of ground forces" to oust Hussein.

The failure to find any WMD has created widespread concern about the sacrifice of U.S. credibility in pursuit of the administration's ideological agenda. Even conservative columnist Jonah Goldberg, whose enthusiasm for the war remains undiminished, believes that President Bush should have admitted his error. Conservative TV personality

## THE FAILURE TO FIND ANY WMD HAS CREATED CONCERN ABOUT THE SACRIFICE OF U.S. CREDIBILITY IN PURSUIT OF AN IDEOLOGICAL AGENDA.

active program seemed to involve longer-range missiles incapable of reaching America. Not only were there no WMD, but "there was no evidence to support the claim that Iraq would have transferred WMD to al Qaeda and much evidence to counter it." Carnegie concluded that Iraq's WMD efforts did not "pose an immediate threat."

In short, nothing that the president said was true, which means that Iraq posed no threat, especially not an immediate one.

Bill O'Reilly admits, "I was wrong," and plans to be "much more skeptical about the Bush administration now." Ramesh Ponnuru, an editor at *National Review*, acknowledges that "the argument for [the war's] urgency—the argument that time was not on our side—has lost a lot of its force." Columnist and Fox News commentator Morton Kondracke admitted that the argument that had "convinced people in Congress" and him to go war had turned out to be false.



The most important disaffected hawk might be Secretary of State Powell. In a February interview with the *Washington Post*, he was asked if he would have recommended an invasion if he had known that Iraq possessed no WMD. "I don't know, because it was the stockpile that presented the final little piece that made it more of a real and present danger and threat to the region and to the world," he responded. The "absence of a stockpile changes the political calculus; it changes the answer you get." That answer did not go over well elsewhere in the administration. A day later Powell loyally declared, "The president made the right decision."

How could so many supposedly bright people have gotten it so wrong? In fact, we were not "all wrong," as David Kay said. John B. Judis and Spencer Ackerman of the *New Republic* point out, "Unbeknownst to the public, the administration faced equally serious opposition within its own intelligence agencies." The CIA inappropriately turned incomplete information into specific warnings, focusing on worst-case scenarios, in the view of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Said Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), "The picture in regards to intelligence is not very flattering." Even so, at the CIA many analysts and officials were skeptical that Iraq posed an imminent threat. Greg Thielmann, formerly head of the State Department's intelligence bureau, explained, "I think it [Iraq] didn't even constitute an imminent threat to its neighbors at the time we went to war." The Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Energy, U.S. Air Force, and International Atomic Energy Agency also criticized particular administration claims. The top-secret version of the National Intelligence Estimate concerning Iraq contained some 40 caveats and dissenting views—which were left out of the public release. Perhaps most significant was the conclusion



of the UN inspectors on the ground in Iraq who found no WMD.

Such contrary conclusions were not what the president and his war-minded aides wanted to hear. So they found ways, including repeated visits to the CIA, to pressure the intelligence services to offer an appropriate rationale for attacking Iraq. Observed Thielmann, "The main problem was that the senior administration officials have what I call faith-based intelligence. They knew what they wanted the intelligence to show."

Top officials made their preferences clear. As Spencer Ackerman and Franklin Foer write, administration claims "were not pieces of objective evidence that the administration relied on to formulate its Iraq policy. Rather, they were products of an intelligence process that the administration—and the Office of the Vice President, in particular—had already politicized in order to justify its Iraq policy."

The insistence on believing what they wanted to believe may be most obvious in the administration's reliance on Ahmad Chalabi, the Iraqi exile convicted of bank fraud. Now a member of the Iraqi Governing Council, Chalabi made light of his consistently erroneous claims in early February: America was now in Baghdad, and little else mattered. "We are heroes in error," he joked. (Amazingly, the Pentagon has budgeted \$3 million to \$4 million this year for continued payments to Chalabi's Iraqi

National Congress for its so-called Information Collection Program.)

Finally, the president and his aides were highly selective in their claims. Not only did they "dismantle the existing filtering process that for fifty years had been preventing the policymakers from getting bad information," writes Kenneth Pollack, a member of the Clinton NSC staff who favored war with Iraq. But "the administration was only telling part of the truth to the American people because it was trying to justify a war in 2003." The most obvious way to demonstrate alleged imminence of a threat was an al-Qaeda connection and possession of nuclear weapons, "and the administration was grossly distorting the intelligence on both things," said Thielmann.

Once the truth came out, the president could have responded as a serious person: he could have taken responsibility for his claims and acknowledged that he had been wrong. He could have added that the administration relied on the best evidence that it had. He could have pointed out that other countries believed that Iraq had WMD. He might have promised to investigate what went wrong with U.S. intelligence-gathering. In short, he could have acted like a steadfast chief executive who regretted that he had taken the nation into war on a falsehood.

But no. In this year's State of the Union speech, George W. Bush talked about liberating Iraq. He cited the challenge of the

occupation. But he devoted just two sentences to WMD, noting the presence of “dozens of weapons of mass destruction-related program activities.” No weapons. No weapons close to production. No weapons of mass destruction programs. But “weapons of mass destruction-related program activities.” When pressed by ABC’s Diane Sawyer on the issue, Bush responded that there was a “possibility” Hussein could have acquired them. “So what’s the difference?” asked Bush. A lot. As surely the president knows.

CIA Director George Tenet knows. He implicitly admitted to the Senate Armed Services Committee that administration officials have misstated the evidence. “If there are areas where I thought someone said something they shouldn’t say, I talked to them about it,” he explained.

And the American people know. WMD deceptions are a major reason that the percentage of people believing Bush to be honest and trustworthy has fallen to 52 percent. They have less reason to trust any president, and especially this one, in the future. When challenged by Tim Russert for having believed that Hussein possessed WMD, former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean responded, “I did, because the president told us. And I’m inclined to believe presidents in most circumstances. I think most Americans, Democrats or Republicans, ought to believe the president of the United States when he does something as serious as send us to war.”

They ought to, but they obviously can’t any longer.

If only President Bush were suffering, then one could feel satisfied that he was simply receiving just recompense. Alas, the U.S., too, has paid a huge price for the administration’s error. Indeed, the surprise defeat of Spain’s conservative party is more easily explained as a reaction against the incumbent government’s discredited decision to back the Bush administration in Iraq than as an

attempt to “appease” terrorists. So, too, the new government’s intention to remove its 1,300 troops from Iraq. Stated Prime Minister-elect Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero: “The war has been a disaster; the occupation continues to be a great disaster. It hasn’t generated anything but more violence and hate.” He would not likely have spoken this way had the Bush administration discovered massive WMD stockpiles. After all, observed Zapatero, “time has shown that the arguments for it lacked credibility...” Even more blunt was his pronouncement, “you can’t organize a war with lies.” Now another former steadfast ally, Poland, is complaining about being misled and has threatened to withdraw its occupation forces ahead of schedule.

And administration credibility is suffering far beyond Europe. Regarding North Korea, for instance, China is questioning U.S. claims that Pyongyang has a highly enriched uranium program. Whispers of doubt also are being heard in Japan and South Korea. Even if Washington is correct, it is ill positioned to persuade

spond too slowly to the next tyrant or terrorist?” Thank the Bush administration.

Only by confessing the truth can Washington begin to repair the damage. That is, for the president to take responsibility and acknowledge that he was wrong. But there’s an even more important issue. Conservatives, in particular, once fought passionately to preserve America as a limited, constitutional Republic, which means that they should take the lead in demanding that the administration be held accountable. The president’s attempt to change the subject, dismiss his critics, and otherwise avoid responsibility is an affront to our democratic principles of government. It matters if the president lied to the American people, if the administration manipulated evidence, if intelligence operations are flawed or if analysts were pressured. It matters if America went to war based on a lie. An intelligence failure doesn’t necessarily mean that the administration is guilty of misbehavior. But Americans should demand that the president defend his decision.

## IMAGINE THE **BUSH ADMINISTRATION** TRYING TO CREATE ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL COALITION BASED ON **AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE**.

anyone. Imagine the Bush administration trying to create another international coalition based on American intelligence, or claiming that Syria or Iran or another country possesses a dangerous WMD capability, or arguing that another destitute, isolated state posed a direct and immediate security threat. Imagine an American campaign to win global support for another preventive war.

That is the great tragedy: Washington will find it hard to lead even if its leadership is critically required. Asks Michael Ignatieff of the Kennedy School of Government, “What if the example of Iraq leads electorates and politicians to re-

The failure to find WMD doesn’t take “away from the merit of the case” for war, says Secretary Powell. No, it destroys it. Along with the president’s and America’s credibility. Republicans rightly criticized Bill Clinton for refusing to take responsibility for his manifold failings. President George W. Bush is taking the same path. It appears that he was wrong, and if he cares about American credibility and democracy, he should admit the truth. ■

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# Truth to Power

Richard Clarke, Public Enemy #1

By Justin Raimondo

THE RELEASE OF Richard Clarke's book and his testimony at the 9/11 Commission was the signal for the Smear Brigade to go to work and create a new hate object for the neocon Right. Their goal was summed up by Matt Drudge in a pithy two-word headline: "Get Him!" The problem is, he has already gotten them—right between the eyes.

*Against All Enemies* makes a powerful case against the broad approach to the War on Terror championed by this administration, arguing in favor of uprooting al-Qaeda rather than changing the composition of the soil it grows in, i.e., "transforming" the greater part of the Middle East.

Dubbed "Delenda Est," after the daily imprecation called down on Carthage by the Roman senator Cato, Clarke's aggressive and focused proposal languished in the lower reaches of the national-security bureaucracy while this administration essentially abandoned the fight against al-Qaeda because it had already decided to go to war with Iraq and saw bin Laden, as Paul Wolfowitz put it, as "that little man in Afghanistan."

By the late summer of 2001, Clarke and CIA Director George Tenet were convinced that "a major series of attacks" was on the horizon. At the time, Clarke noted intelligence pointing to an attack overseas, "in Israel or Saudi

Arabia. Maybe. But maybe it will be here." After fighting since January for a high-level national-security briefing focused on al-Qaeda, Clarke finally managed to get the attention of the Bush administration on September 4, 2001 and made his case for focusing on al-Qaeda. Rumsfeld looked distracted and kept bringing up Iraq. Clarke's proposal to send an armed Predator drone after bin Laden was vetoed.

So what is the administration's answer to Clarke? Well, it turns out that he's Rand Beers's best friend, you see, and Beers is advising John Kerry. So there!

Even more pathetic is the call by Sen. Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) to prosecute Clarke because he supposedly "lied under oath" and said the Bush administration was on the ball at a hearing in 2002. Why stop with Clarke? Let's weigh the loyalty of every administration official who ever put a positive spin on his bosses' performance while privately holding to a more skeptical view. That should quickly depopulate Washington, D.C.

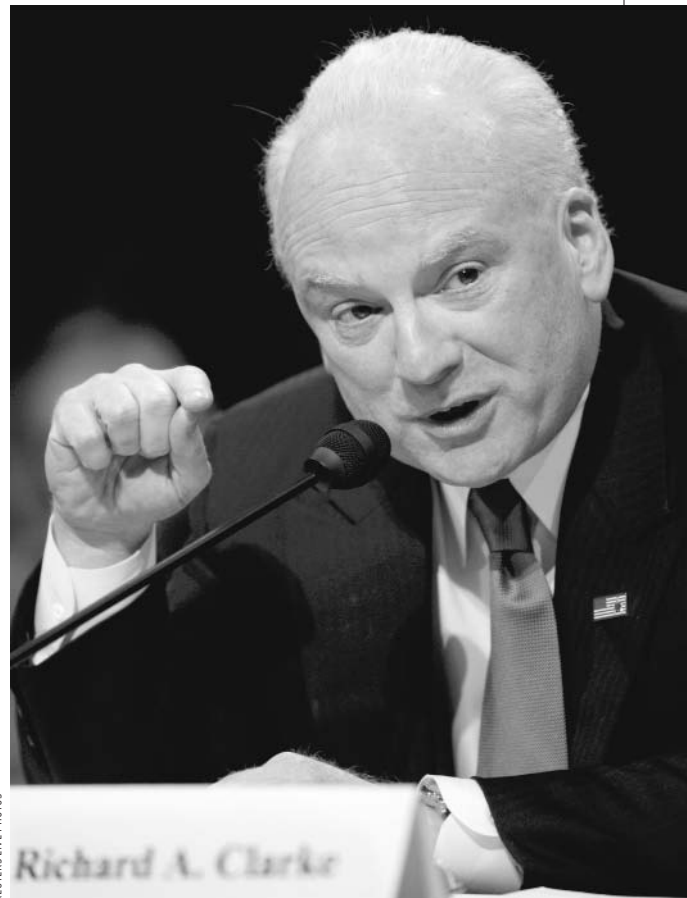
In a memo dated September 4, 2001, Clarke urged Condoleezza Rice and others "to imagine a day after a terrorist attack, with hundreds of Americans dead at home and abroad, and ask themselves

what they could have done earlier."

*National Review Online* has an answer to this. Clarke is "the long-suffering guy who wants us to know that he's always right, that everybody else is always wrong, that his boss is nuts, and that he would have spoken up sooner, but he was having some very serious computer problems." Clarke at the hearings, opines Denis Boyles, was like "Dilbert on Springer."

Is this really the way to characterize someone who accurately predicted the worst terrorist attack in American history? Clarke isn't Dilbert—he's Cassandra. This isn't low comedy; it's high tragedy.

Charles Krauthammer, who was once a psychiatrist, diagnoses Clarke as "clearly an angry man, angry that Rice demoted him, angry that he was denied a coveted bureaucratic job by the Bush administration. Angry and unreliable. He told the commission to disregard



REUTERS LIVE PHOTOS



what he said in his 2002 briefing because he was, in effect, spinning. 'I've done it for several presidents,' he said. He's still at it, doing it now for himself."

In Krauthammer's Washington, anger is too uncouth an emotion to display in public, especially in an official hearing—except the families of the 9/11 victims didn't seem to mind. They applauded Clarke when he apologized for his failures, but then they, too, are angry, especially since not a single high official in the Bush administration has followed Clarke's example. No one has taken responsibility. No one has been fired or even demoted, but for Clarke. It's not just Clarke and the families of the fallen who are angry. According to a recent *Newsweek* poll, Bush's approval rating has slid from over 70 percent to 57 percent, while his handling of the war receives even lower marks: 44 percent approve, 50 percent disapprove. The whole country beyond the Beltway is increasingly furious—and with good reason.

But they're not mad over at the *Weekly Standard*, except at Clarke for his "inappropriate" apology. As far as

hardly respond to the attack when it came? Clarke showed a much firmer grasp of history when he likened the Bush administration's decision to go after Iraq to FDR retaliating for Pearl Harbor by taking out after Mexico.

The frantic fear driving the Smear Brigade has them getting their signals crossed. While Vice President Cheney characterizes Clarke as an egomaniac who "wasn't in the loop," Dr. Rice avers that he was "in every meeting that was held on terrorism." Speaking of crossed signals, Senator Frist had the gall to call Clarke's book "an appalling act of profiteering," that is "trading on insider information"—this, in defense of an administration that, until recently, employed Richard "Conflict of Interest" Perle, the high-rolling *bon vivant* whose war-related business investments and access to the inner councils of the U.S. government kept him rolling in cash.

The *Wall Street Journal* boldly casts Clarke's contention that the Bush administration couldn't have cared less about al-Qaeda as irrelevant: "Even if everything Mr. Clarke says is true . . . it is beside the point. What matters is which strategy

Clarke no doubt welcomes the *Journal's* attempt to elevate the debate and agrees that the general strategic question is key. He makes a cogent case against the Iraq War by pointing out that it diverted vital resources—including the attention of this administration—away from bin Laden and toward the fool's gold of Iraq. The conquest of Iraq, he says, has undermined the war against the real terror masters and strengthened their hand. We are seeing the truth of his contention played out every day as jihadists take to the battlefields of Iraq and the second generation of al-Qaeda takes its place in the front ranks of the worldwide struggle against the U.S.

Having served four presidents and spent 30 years inside the federal bureaucracy, Clarke is well-acquainted with the great problem faced by all non-market entities, especially government: misallocation of resources. Since non-market entities cannot perceive market signals and don't operate along profit-and-loss lines, they cannot rationally allocate resources—a disability that often has fatal consequences. In spite of the best efforts of people like Clarke and CIA Director Tenet—who, according to Clarke's testimony, warned the president nearly every day that a terrorist attack was imminent—on September 11, 2001, over 3,000 involuntary "consumers" of government "services" paid the price of this institutional blindness. Explaining what happened and why seems to be Clarke's way of personally making amends. In this, he shows more class than his detractors and a lot craftier strategic sense. He has them right where he wants them: the more the White House denounces him, the guiltier it looks. ■

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## NOT A SINGLE HIGH OFFICIAL IN THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAS FOLLOWED CLARKE'S EXAMPLE. NO ONE HAS TAKEN RESPONSIBILITY.

they're concerned, nobody in the U.S. government has anything to apologize for. That would be "like FDR apologizing for Pearl Harbor." But what if Roosevelt had consistently ignored warnings that a Japanese assault was imminent? What if his appointed underlings had buried a proposal to buttress Pearl Harbor's defenses and sidelined its author, smearing him when he went public? What if they had been so busy planning an assault against a country that never attacked us and represented no possible threat to us in any way that they could

against terrorism the U.S. should pursue now and for the next four years."

Be here now, and all that. But this Zen view of the great tragedy of our time is not very convincing as long as the War Party invokes 9/11 as the rationale for endless wars, in Iraq and beyond. Isn't prevention the whole point of convening the 9/11 Commission in the first place? We have heard government officials describe another terrorist attack as "inevitable," but one has to wonder at what point this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

# The Passion and Its Enemies

The campaign against the movie bespeaks deeper animus.

By Patrick J. Buchanan

AT THE LATIN MASS at old St. Mary's, the church was packed and the line outside the confessional was unusually long. "The Passion," I thought to myself. And so it was. "Worshippers Take 'Passion' Back to Church," was the headline in that Sunday's *Washington Times*. The sub-head ran: "Mel Gibson's film is inspiring parishioners to join congregations, go 'back to the faith.'"

Thirty million Americans have seen "The Passion of the Christ." According to Gallup, two-thirds of the nation intends to see the film in a theater or on DVD. By Good Friday, the crowds should be enormous. For this movie is a religious experience, a masterpiece, a work of art of immense power. The images of Christ and his Mother are burned forever into the imaginations of those who see it. "It is as it was," said the Holy Father in Rome.

Though it is a Catholic film that faithfully replicates the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, the Seven Last Words, with allusions to the Eucharist and the war between Satan and the Mother of God, as Tom Piatak writes in *Chronicles*, evangelical Christians are as moved as traditional Catholics. It is an ecumenical moment. For once, Christians have come together, not to denounce some blasphemous filth funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, but in celebration and praise of an inspired work of art.

And despite the dire warnings of the Anti-Defamation League, not one synagogue has been torched, nor one American Jew assaulted. Yet still the attacks

come. Not since D.W. Griffith portrayed the Klan as heroic defenders of white womanhood in "The Birth of a Nation" has a movie been so reviled.

"[A] wasted exercise in sadomasochism," writes Al Neuharth. "A repulsive masochistic fantasy, a sacred snuff film" that uses "classically anti-Semitic images," rants Leon Wieseltier in the *New Republic*. "A sickening death trip," says David Denby in the *New Yorker*. "It is sick," writes James Carroll in the *Boston Globe*, "a blood libel against the Jewish people," echoes Robert Scheer of the *Los Angeles Times*, "Jew-baiting," says William Safire in the *New York Times*, "fascistic," agrees Richard Cohen in the *Washington Post*. Daniel Goldhagen, author of *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*, calls "The Passion" "a sadomasochistic, orgiastic display that demonizes Jews as it degrades those who revel in viewing the horror." Gibson, Goldhagen writes, "restores a blood-drenched Christian culture of death."

And here is the *New York Times'* Frank Rich, ten days after the Ash Wednesday opening:

With its laborious buildup to its orgasmic spurtings of blood and other bodily fluids, Mr. Gibson's film is constructed like nothing so much as a porn movie, replete with slo-mo climaxes and pounding music for the money shots. Of all the 'Passion' critics, no one has nailed its artistic vision more precisely than

Christopher Hitchens, who ... called it a homoerotic 'exercise in lurid masochism' for those who 'like seeing handsome young men stripped and flayed alive over a long period of time.'

That "The Passion of the Christ" is loved by Christians and loathed by such as these is a measure of the breadth of our religious divide.

But why all this venom against a movie these writers knew by then that millions of Christians had taken to their hearts? To vent, to insult, to provoke? Having failed to have the film censored, banned, or boycotted, some are now crossing a forbidden frontier to commit hate crimes against Christianity. They have begun to attack the Gospels as responsible for the Holocaust.

In a *Washington Post* column titled "Gibson's Blood Libel," Charles Krauthammer links the crucifixion story to "a history of centuries of relentless, and at times savage, persecution of Jews in Christian lands." For 2000 years, he says, the Catholic Church taught that "the Jews were Christ killers." Only at Vatican II did Rome take responsibility for the "baleful history" that came out of the "central story" of the Gospels.

The blood libel that this story [of the crucifixion] affixed upon the Jewish people had led to countless Christian massacres of Jews and prepared Europe for the ultimate massacre—6 million Jews systematically murdered in six years—in the heart, alas, of a Christian

continent. It is no accident Vatican II occurred just two decades after the Holocaust, indeed in its shadow.

But Krauthammer stands truth on its head. Not until the ideas of Rousseau, Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud had poisoned the soul of Europe and Christianity had lost the continent did Hitler and Stalin come to power to work their evil will upon Christians and Jews. Hitler learned his hatreds in Viennese gutters, not Catholic schools. Speaking of blood libels, has there been one greater than Krauthammer's accusation that the Gospel of Jesus Christ paved the way to Auschwitz?

Krauthammer echoes Richard Cohen who says the movie is "anti-Semitic ... in the way portions of the New Testament are—an assignment of blame that culminated in the Holocaust."

Both columns are of a piece with the slanders of Pius XII. Credited by one Jewish historian with saving 800,000 Jews, praised by the Rabbi of Rome, publicly mourned on his death by Golda Meir, Pius XII, too, has fallen victim to the blood libel that he was "Hitler's Pope."

Krauthammer and Cohen have picked up the new line advanced by Eli Wiesel, that Nazis and Christians in the Holocaust were one and the same.

[A]ll the Jews were victims, and all the killers were Christians. They didn't become killers in a vacuum. They emerged from a certain civilization, teaching, and tradition of hate. They're an example of what happens to people who learn to hate, and that's a Christian problem.

Krauthammer repeatedly invokes Nazi analogies. Mel Gibson's defense of his film about Christ reminds him of Leni Riefenstahl's defense of her films about Hitler. He calls Gibson's interpretation of the Gospels "spectacularly vicious." Why "vicious"? Because Gibson

places the High Priest Caiaphas at the scourging, and this cannot be found in the Gospels.

But this is to cavil on the ninth part of a hair. According to Mark 15:31-32, "the chief priests" were mocking Christ at the foot of the cross, even as he was dying:

In like manner also the chief priests mocking, said with the scribes one to another: He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.

Does Krauthammer contend that Caiaphas was not central to the plot to have Christ killed? If so, his argument is not with Mel but with Matthew 26:2-3:

Then were gathered together the chief priests and ancients of the people into the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas: And they consulted together, that by subtlety they might apprehend Jesus and put him to death.

Something not clear here, Charles? And if Caiaphas conspired to kill Jesus, is it artistic injustice to have him observe the scourging he had brought about?

What motive did the religious establishment have? Consider these lines from Matthew 23, spoken by Christ right in the face of the Pharisees who had repeatedly sought to entrap him:

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers. For this you shall receive the greater judgment .... Blind guides who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel .... Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness .... So you outwardly indeed

appear to men just; but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity .... Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees ... you are the sons of them that killed the prophets. You serpents, you generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?

This probably did not go down all that well at the Temple. And Jesus acted upon his words (Matthew 21:12-13):

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves. And he saith to them: It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.

The Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priest had every reason to hate Jesus and want him dead. Is this so difficult to understand? And did not the mob assembled by the high priests seek the death of Christ?

Here is Matthew 27:22-25:

Pilate saith to them: What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? They all said: Let him be crucified. The governor said to them: Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying: Let him be crucified. And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made; taking water washed his hands before the people saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it. And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us and upon our children.

Krauthammer is also upset with the appearances of Satan in the film. "Satan appears four times. Twice, this sinister, hooded, androgynous embodiment of



evil is found ... where? Moving among the crowd of Jews."

But Satan first appears besides Jesus as he undergoes the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, alone. When Satan appears in the crowd, it is to observe Christ suffering, his scourging at the pillar by Romans, or to stare across at his Mother as she watches her Son carrying the cross up Calvary. If Satan is in a crowd, it has to be a Jewish crowd. Jerusalem was a Jewish city. The only Romans are Pilate and his soldiers.

As for the repellent term "Christ killers," Krauthammer mouths myths he must have heard down at shul. As a cradle Catholic, I never heard this term until a Jewish friend told me this was what we Catholics were taught in our schools. But this crude blasphemous phrase is not one devout nuns of the 1940s or 1950s or Catholics of the Holy Name Society would ever use. It is a term ascribed to us by those who never knew us.

Krauthammer refers to the "baleful history" of the Crucifixion story. What did the Crucifixion give mankind? Salvation, the opening of the gates of heaven, Western civilization, the greatest art, architecture, music, painting, sculpture, cathedrals and churches in history, the idea that all men are children of God and that each has an innate worth and dignity, which puts limits on the power of any state—and an end to slavery.

No Cross, no Christianity. No Christianity, no West. No West, no freedom, no human rights, no America. Where does Krauthammer think our civilization and culture came from?

In her column "Hating the Jews," Mona Charen accuses Gibson of seeding "his film with images of Jewish guilt and perfidy." But how can one tell the story of how Christ was betrayed by Judas for 30 pieces of silver, how the scribes and Pharisees and high priest plotted against Him, how the crowd cried "Give us Barabas," and "Let Him be crucified!,"

how Pilate cravenly capitulated—without having a touch of "guilt and perfidy"?

What is the attachment of columnists in 2004 to a high priest of the first century A.D.? Why the Caiaphas Defense Fund? Is it not possible to accept that after Jesus berated the scribes and Pharisees in front of the people they might want to kill him? Is it not possible that the high priest would plot the death of so charismatic and threatening a figure?

What these writers are saying is that it is fine to say Pilate ordered the crucifixion, and the Romans did it, but anti-Semitic to say Caiaphas was the prime mover in the Passover plot. Yet, for Caiaphas to be innocent, the Gospels must be myths or lies. My film is anti-Semitic only if the Gospels are anti-Semitic, says Gibson.

Exactly the point, says Stanley Kauffmann of the *New Republic*: "'The Passion' is anti-Semitic, because the Gospels themselves are anti-Semitic—in the sense of fixing Jewish responsibility for

faithful to the Christian imperative to tell the Gospel truth about the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ is, to non-Christians and post-Christians, to spread anti-Semitism, our conflict is irreconcilable.

Yet a point bears repeating. Though Jewish leaders did conspire to put Jesus to death, this does not mean, has never meant, that all Jews were or are culpable in his death, or even that the Jewish establishment knew Christ was the Son of God. Common sense suggests they did not believe it—as does Christ himself from the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

And while many whose hatred for "The Passion" knows no bounds are Jewish, other Jewish writers—Michael Medved, Don Feder, Matt Drudge, Paul Gottfried—have urged their co-religionists and ethnic kinsmen to control the hysteria. Rabbi Daniel Lapin of Toward Tradition accuses Foxman and the ADL of "driving a wedge between American

## **NO CROSS, NO CHRISTIANITY. NO CHRISTIANITY, NO WEST. NO WEST, NO FREEDOM.**

the Crucifixion." Abe Foxman agrees: "the Gospels, if taken literally, can be very damaging." But what if the Gospels "taken literally" are true?

To Boston University's Paula Fredriksen, an apostate Catholic and convert to Judaism, "anti-Semitism has been integral to Christianity." In the *Toronto Globe & Mail*, Donald Akinson writes, "To film a literal version of the Gospel of John is like filming a faithful version of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*."

With folks who believe this, dialogue seems pointless. For they are saying that Christianity is anti-Semitic at its root and either we rewrite the Gospels to eradicate any "perfidy" by the Jewish authorities who delivered Christ to Pilate, or we are colluding in anti-Semitism and responsible for its consequences. If being

Jews and Christians." But Rabbi Lapin seems a voice crying in the wilderness. For Ms. Charen puts "The Passion" in the context of the following events: an assault on a Kiev synagogue by thugs yelling "Kill the Kikes," the desecration of a Jewish cemetery in Greece, the French Ambassador in London blurting out at a dinner party that Israel is a "shitty little country."

But is it really fair to include Gibson's film in this litany? Is it wise to keep up this vendetta against a movie that Christians have embraced, when millions of these Christians give uncritical loyalty to Israel?

Safire rails that "The Passion" is the "bloodiest, most brutal example of sustained sadism ever presented on the screen ... reveling in savagery to provoke outrage and cast blame ..."

The villains at whom the audience's outrage is directed are the actors' playing bloodthirsty rabbis and their rabid Jewish followers. This is the essence of the medieval 'passion play' preserved in pre-Hitler Germany at Oberammergau, a source of the hatred of all Jews as 'Christ killers.'

But this is nonsense. The only people who come away from this film in "outrage" are those who went into it in outrage. Even Foxman, who slipped into a preview, acknowledges as much:

As the lights came up, the silence was etched with stifled sobs and tears. The 3,000 Christian pastors, leaders, students and others who attended the preview of the film's graphic portrayal of the events leading up to the Crucifixion were visibly moved by the images that brought them closer than they may have ever been to bearing witness to the Passion of Jesus.

Does this sound like the "kind of sentiment we would expect from Christians ready to act on their latent anti-Semitism?" asks Dr. William Donohue of the Catholic League. That brings us to the heart of the matter. Though we all see the same movie, we hear and see different messages. Where they see Caiaphas, perfidy, and anti-Semitism, we see Christ, his suffering, and what salvation cost. As Bruce Anderson writes in the *Spectator*, Christians do not focus on the characters that so captivate Safire, Charen, and Krauthammer.

[T]he horror does not come from the artist's imagination. It comes from the self-sacrifice of the son of God who, after preaching to and living among the poor and the outcast, endured a felon's humiliating death. Mocked for His pretensions to kingship, He revealed the nature of His Kingdom by embracing His Cross.

For centuries, Christians have read the Gospel story of the passion and death of Christ in Holy Week. Yet, never has there been a pogrom in America. America is not the Russia of Alexander III. But if these writers truly believe millions of Christians have sat through two hours of endless "Jew-baiting" and failed to recognize it, what does that tell us about what they think of our intelligence, our sensitivity, our decency?

Safire twice refers to Oberammergau and calls it a Jew-baiting passion play "preserved in pre-Hitler Germany, a source of the hatred of all Jews as 'Christ killers.'" The famous Oberammergau passion play dates back to 1633 and the Thirty Years War when villagers in this tiny Alpine town were spared from the Black Plague and vowed to give thanks to their God by producing a play on his passion and death, once every ten years. It is a six-hour thing of beauty known to Catholics worldwide, few of whom have ever seen it. Were that play a cause of the Holocaust, why was there no Holocaust in the centuries when Catholic kings ruled the Holy Roman Empire? Why did it happen only after the Hitler came to power and Europe was convulsed in the worst war in its history, 300 years after the play was first performed? Blaming a six-hour play, put on once every ten years, by 2,000 amateur actors, in a tiny town of 5,000 buried in the Tyrolean Alps, for Hitler's pogrom against the Jews is so preposterous it calls up the old adage: "Anti-Catholicism is the anti-Semitism of the intellectuals."

To Safire, Catholicism leads straight to the Holocaust. The line from Matthew, "Let his blood be upon us and our children," he writes, has led to "millenniums of persecution, scapegoating and ultimately mass murder that flowed partly from its malign repetition." This was "finally addressed by the Catholic Church after the defeat of Nazism."

In 1965's historic Second Vatican Council during the papacy of Pope Paul VI, the church decided that while some Jewish leaders and their followers had pressed for the death of Jesus, "still, what happened in his passion cannot be charged against all Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor the Jews of today."

That was a sea change in the doctrinal interpretation of the Gospels, and the beginning of major interfaith progress

This statement is historically and patently false. *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican II document to which Safire refers, is not any "sea change in the doctrinal interpretation of the Gospels." It is a reaffirmation of traditional Catholic teaching for the benefit of Jewish groups that requested it.

Christianity and the Church have always taught it was our sins that put Christ on the Cross. As Legionary Father Thomas Williams, dean of the school of theology at Regina Apostolorum Pontifical University in Rome, a consultant to Gibson's film, tells the *National Catholic Register*:

[T]he fathers of the Second Vatican Council didn't see themselves as reversing any prior teachings on this question [of Jewish responsibility for Christ's death]. The council categorically *reaffirmed* perennial Catholic teaching that all of humanity's sins, and the sins of Christians in particular, are responsible for Christ's death, as stated, *inter alia*, in the catechism of the Council of Trent.

Gibson drives the point home with brutal force as he plays the Roman soldier who hammers the first nail into the palm of Christ. His message is reaffirmed in the penultimate scene described in *America* by Lloyd Baugh, S.J.,

In a physically static but morally dynamic representation of the Pieta, Mary stares not at the dead Jesus but directly into the camera, and therefore directly at the viewer .... This shot, lasting a long 20 seconds, invites the viewers to enter the narrative and assume their responsibility, as sinners, for the death of this Jesus, who the film repeatedly makes clear has died for our sins. Gibson here is saying, more strongly than any other director has done, that it is not the Jewish people who killed Jesus; every one of us sinful human beings is responsible for his death.

This is why, at film's end, men and women sit in stunned silence or sob. Gibson has charged us with moral complicity in the suffering and death of the Son of God we have just witnessed in all its horror. That is why we are moved. But for Mona Charen, it is all just another attempt to blame the Jews: "There is a seemingly unquenchable thirst to vilify Jews, to deny them their humanity, to strip them of their history and to transform them—in propaganda—into oppressors rather than oppressed."

Give it a rest, Mona.

This is a film in which every heroic figure is a Jew: Jesus, his Mother, Mary Magdalene, the Apostles Peter and John, St. Veronica who wipes his face on the road to Calvary, Simon of Cyrene who, though first bitter at being conscripted to carry Christ's cross, is soon trying to lift the burden from his shoulders. Jewish members of the councils are heard at the court proceedings crying out against a "travesty ... a beastly travesty." At the crucifixion, a member of the Jewish council, most likely Joseph of Arimathea, is seen helping take Christ down from the cross. Along the road to Calvary, the women of Jerusalem weep openly. The entire film underscores the

words of Christ (John 4:22) to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, "Salvation is from the Jews."

If there is any "unquenchable thirst to vilify," it would appear to be on the part of those who cannot stop vilifying Mel Gibson. What has this man done but defend himself and his film against the most savage charges ever leveled at a work of art? As for Ms. Charen's suggestion that Jews are "oppressed," one must ask: When have Jews ever been oppressed in this country?

In World War II, millions perished at the hands of the Nazis. A horrific and historic atrocity about which we are regularly reminded. But in that 20th century tens of millions of Christians—Armenians, Mexicans, Spaniards, Russians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Poles, Chinese, Hungarians,

THIS IS A FILM IN WHICH **EVERY HEROIC FIGURE IS A JEW**: JESUS, HIS MOTHER, MARY MAGDALENE, THE APOSTLES PETER AND JOHN.

Cubans, Vietnamese, Sudanese, Timorese—were martyred for their faith by Communists, Nazis, and Islamic fanatics. No nation, no race, no people have cornered the market on suffering. Nor on oppression. As there were renegade Catholics in Hitler's Reich, so there were atheistic Jewish Bolsheviks like Lazar Kaganovich, Stalin's man in the Ukraine, who were as guilty of genocide as Heinrich Himmler.

Author Gertrude Himmelfarb asks how Christians would react if "a Hollywood so notoriously populated by Jews" made a film about how Jews were falsely accused and put to death during the Spanish Inquisition. But the event in 1481 Ms. Himmelfarb brings up is not remotely comparable to the Crucifixion that is the central event in 2000 years of Christendom. As for her admonition that we stop coarsening the culture by

going "over the edge" with films rooted in violence and sadism, is Ms. Himmelfarb asking for a moratorium on movies about the Holocaust?

Frank Rich, who has reviled Gibson and his film since he first heard of it, now frets for his safety: "The Passion' has made me feel less secure as a Jew in America than ever before." Well, Frank, if you were not insulting millions of Christians by telling them a beloved film about their Savior is a homoerotic "jamboree of bloody beefcake" and calling the Pope "a shill," you might not be at risk of having your lights punched out.

A decade ago, Irving Kristol warned his kinsmen and co-religionists not to antagonize a huge friendly Christian majority by using the courts to de-Christianize the country. Jews who wish to maintain their separate and unique reli-

gious and ethnic character ought not be in the vanguard of those seeking to prevent Christians from maintaining the Christian character of their country, said Kristol. He added pungently:

One can easily understand the attractiveness of this vision to Jews. What is less easy to understand is the chutzpah of American Jews in publicly embracing this dual vision. Such arrogance is, I would suggest, a particularly Jewish form of political stupidity.

Kristol subtly titled his piece, "On the Political Stupidity of the Jews."

Yet still the questions arise. Why do a handful of writers continue to rage that the film is a moral atrocity, a horror, the product of a deranged or anti-Semitic mind? Why do they hate "The Passion of the Christ" so?



The answer I believe may be found in words this writer spoke at the Republican convention, 12 years ago: "There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself."

Those who hate "The Passion" are, almost all, on the other side in that war. They hate the movie and the messenger, and, as they admit, the "central story" of the Gospels, the Crucifixion of Christ. Why? Because if "The Passion" is true to the Gospels and the Gospels are themselves true, then there is a painful truth to be faced. It is found in John 1:11, inside "The Last Gospel" of the Tridentine mass Mel Gibson attends. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Admittedly, that is a hard message to hear.

Safire quotes Christ (Matthew 10:34) as saying: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." But Christ is using a metaphor here, the meaning of which follows:

For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household.

Again and again, Christ refers to this coming divide between those who will follow him and those who will reject him. "He who is not with me is against me; and he who does not gather with me scatters" (Luke 11:23).

The venom spewed at "The Passion of the Christ," only testifies to the truth of the Savior's warning, "As the world has hated me, so also it will hate you." Braveheart has led and won a great victory in the crusade that is the culture war that will determine the fate of the civilization that came out of what happened on Calvary and on that first Easter morning. ■

# Rumbles on the Right

California's GOP rejects the Bush amnesty plan.

By Steven Greenhut

AFTER WATCHING George W. Bush sign the No Child Left Behind Act, wage a pre-emptive war against a country that had never threatened us, and engage in a spending spree that makes Bill Clinton seem like Grover Cleveland, I was convinced that nothing could possibly redeem the Bush presidency.

I was wrong.

The president's politically inspired plan to create a guest-worker program—amnesty for illegal immigrants on the installment plan, according to one critic—has accomplished something valuable here in California, Ground Zero for the immigration debate.

No, the Bush plan won't do as intended and help the president carry the state in the general election. Despite what myopic GOP leaders say, California will vote overwhelmingly for John Kerry in November. Bush won't win any long-term support for the Republican Party in the state's burgeoning Latino community, which remains an unshakable part of the Democratic coalition.

And the Bush plan will absolutely, positively do nothing to stop the stream of illegal immigration that is quickly turning Southern Californian into a northern outpost of Mexico. If anything, it will encourage even more illegal border crossings.

But the plan has finally shaken California Republicans out of their post-Prop. 187 stupor. That's an unintended consequence, of course. But in the current world of politics, we must be thankful for whatever we can gain, intended or not.

Proposition 187 was the 1994 ballot initiative, passed by 59 percent of Cali-

fornia voters, including 20 percent of Latino voters, that would have banned illegal immigrants from receiving non-emergency public services, including education.

Reasonable people had reservations about whether Prop. 187 would be effective. An ongoing attempt at reviving it—the courts and the previous governor dismantled it—would backfire at this point. Nevertheless, Prop. 187 was not an attack on immigration in general or immigrants in particular, but on those who came to this country in violation of American laws. It was a reflection of genuine concern about illegal immigration and the failure of the federal government to do anything to stop what amounts to an invasion.

But since its passage, Prop. 187 has overshadowed any serious immigration debate in a state that is swamped by immigration. Few politicians have been willing to discuss the issue in any critical way without summoning the "ghosts of Prop. 187."

California Democratic Party Chairman Art Torres captured a general establishment sentiment in 1995 when he called Prop. 187's passage the "last gasp" of white California. When the media covers immigration, they invariably refer to Prop. 187 as a racist effort, "Anglo" California's scapegoating of immigrants in the midst of a recession.

Instead of fighting back and making a case for responsible, legal immigration and standing up for a viewpoint that's popular among the state's electorate (which remains predominantly Anglo),

Republican leaders rolled over. They agreed that discussions about immigration, in a post-Prop. 187 world, were dangerous.

Republicans accepted the story that the state's growing Latino community was up for grabs politically, but then Republican Gov. Pete Wilson rode Prop. 187 to victory by exploiting anti-immigrant sentiment. (One pro-Prop. 187 ad, which showed illegal immigrants lining up at the border with the spoken words "They keep coming," has gone down in California political history the way George H.W. Bush's Willie Horton ads portraying Michael Dukakis as soft on crime have gone down in national political history.)

As a result, the theory goes, the Latino community—not just the new immigrants but the majority of voters of Latino descent—embraced the Democrats and Republican fortunes have declined ever since. To have success in the state, then, Republicans need to appeal (i.e., pander) to Latino voters by assuring them that they are not against legal immigration and will not be too critical of illegal immigration either.

There's no doubt that Republican political hopes have declined in recent years. Before Arnold Schwarzenegger scored an overwhelming gubernatorial recall victory, every state constitutional office was held by Democrats. In the legislature, Democrats are just shy of the crucial two-thirds majority in both houses.

The question is whether support for limiting illegal immigration caused the Republican Party to crumble. I'm skeptical. Prop. 187 energized some previously apathetic Latino voters, but Latinos leaned in the Democratic direction before Prop. 187. With the exception of South Florida and its Cuban population, the Latino population is overwhelmingly Democratic nationwide. Surely, that's not the result of Prop. 187.

**There are signs that various radical Islamic terrorist groups that have previously pursued separate agendas might now cooperate** on a local level to carry out attacks. The possibility is a nightmare scenario for security experts as it could mean that the single group al-Qaeda has morphed into an international terrorism Hydra. The bombings in Madrid may turn out to be one example of the new terrorism, locally planned and executed using various resources both from Spain and Morocco. Hamas, which has never targeted Westerners and has confined its terrorist actions to Israel and the occupied territories, may be planning similar actions. In the wake of the Yassin assassination, Hamas's new operational leader, Abdel Aziz Rantisi, promised retaliation against Israel and its supporters everywhere. He later retracted his statement and limited retaliation to Israel, but American counter-terrorism experts believe that there are specific indications that Hamas might by proxy strike against U.S. targets for the first time. Its support infrastructure in the U.S., which is not an operational one, could provide logistical assistance for a terrorist act in North America carried out by a cell from another group, possibly North African or Southeast Asian.



**The comic opera Pakistani army offensive in South Waziristan, initiated to impress visiting U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, has failed** to round up any significant members of al-Qaeda sheltering inside Pakistan. There was never any reliable information suggesting that Ayman al-Zawahiri or sizable numbers of al-Qaeda were located at the village of Kaloosha, though some Mujahedeen from the Afghan war with the Soviet Union did resettle in the area 15 years ago, married local women, and were adopted by the Yargul Khel tribe. The Pakistani military, after hyping to the world media the prospect that Zawahiri was trapped, has now admitted its failure and is facing a growing backlash from the well armed and vengeful tribesmen whose homes have been destroyed by helicopter gunships and artillery fire.



**The Bush administration's unfounded pre-war claims of an Iraqi WMD program have come back to haunt the United States in its efforts to halt the Iranian nuclear program.** Widespread skepticism in Europe of American claims regarding Iranian intentions has somewhat obscured the undeniable fact that Iran's WMD program and terrorist ties were always a much greater threat than Saddam Hussein. Iran supports terrorist organizations like Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, helping Hezbollah, for example, to carry out two major terrorist operations in Argentina. General antipathy towards the U.S. and fears that it is seeking a pretext for taking preemptive military action have up until now prevented sharper-edged declarations from the IAEA over the Iranian nuclear program. Iran has meanwhile been playing a clever game with IAEA members, alternately cajoling and threatening. The White House knows it does not have enough support within IAEA for sanctions, so it intends slowly to build a campaign of pressure against Tehran by selective disclosures of its nuclear programs using press leaks to "friendly" major American media outlets. ■

*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates, an international security consultancy.*

A strong argument can be made that the California Republican Party's prospects have declined not just in relation to the growth of the Latino population but in relation to its refusal to take strong stands on immigration and other issues that appeal to the general electorate. As the Republicans have become squishy, they have given voters less reason to vote for them. By embracing the post-Prop. 187 mythology, Republicans unsuccessfully tried to lure new Latino voters even as they alienated the non-Latino voters at their core.

But change is in the air. The first real shift in the debate over immigration came during the recall election. The Latino caucus overreached and pushed ahead SB 60, which granted drivers' licenses to illegal immigrants. It infuriated people for obvious reasons. Once "undocumented" workers have this valuable document, they have *de facto* legal status.

The budget crisis, the electricity crisis, Governor-reject Gray Davis's dour approach to governance, and Schwarzenegger's personal popularity had much to do with the success of the recall. But so did the license bill and Schwarzenegger's vow to repeal it—a promise he quickly made good on after his inauguration.

The second shift came in the March 2 primary election. This was the first election following the announcement of Bush's amnesty plan. Immigration was not the key point of debate, nor did the most vociferously anti-immigration candidates win the Republican primary races. But it was rare to find a candidate who backed the Bush plan. Even the moderate/liberal wing of the party stood against it.

Bill Jones, the former secretary of state who won the primary race to challenge liberal Bay Area Democrat Barbara Boxer for the U.S. Senate, is a moderate-conservative Republican who backs the president in almost every way. But he was painfully careful about the president's guest-worker proposal. He

refused to support the Bush plan, although he did not want to alienate the White House either. He weaseled around the problem by saying that he cannot support or oppose the plan until he sees specifics. He said he would oppose any plan that created amnesty. Jones won against the more fervently anti-immigration Howard Kaloogian, who didn't have much money and never had more than a prayer.

But Jones also beat Rosario Marin, the former U.S. Treasurer and new-style candidate that is supposed to be able to beat Democrats. She is a Latina, pro-choice, and moderate on most issues. She talked incessantly about her rags-to-riches immigrant story. During a debate between several leading candidates running for the Senate seat, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that they all backed

This phenomenon was evident at all levels. In the 70th Assembly District in coastal Orange County, the more liberal candidate Cristi Cristich tried to ring the president's immigration plan around the neck of the conservative candidate, Chuck DeVore. DeVore is generally pro-Bush, but he distanced himself from the Bush plan and won easily, especially after he publicized Cristich's past activities on behalf of President Bill Clinton. But Cristich's attempt to portray DeVore as pro-amnesty hurt him. "That was the one line of attack from my opponent that was most effective, albeit one based on a false premise," DeVore told me following his victory. "I had more people calling me threatening to drop me like a hot potato." This point is crucial: most candidates viewed support for the president's plan as lethal.

BY EMBRACING THE POST-PROP. 187 MYTHOLOGY, **REPUBLICANS UNSUCCESSFULLY TRIED TO LURE NEW LATINO VOTERS EVEN AS THEY ALIENATED THE NON-LATINO VOTERS AT THEIR CORE**

Bush policies on every issue except immigration. Marin was the only one to support Bush on his plan, and this early favorite lost to Jones by 24 percentage points.

In the bizarre race pitting former congressman Bob Dornan against incumbent congressman Dana Rohrabacher for the 46th congressional district seat, seven weeks before the election the *OC Weekly* predicted that Rohrabacher would be the winner after he supported HR 3722, which requires hospitals to report illegal immigrants to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The *Weekly* made a useful point: it's beneficial to come out against illegal immigration, at least in a heavily Republican congressional district. (For a variety of reasons, Rohrabacher stomped Dornan by 66 percentage points.)

"What a disaster," said Shawn Steel, immediate past president of the California Republican Party, in describing the Bush immigration plan. "I assume it's a trial balloon. Well, it dropped like a rock." He agrees that the specter of Prop. 187 has worn off. "People have gotten out of their manholes. They no longer are saying, 'They're here. We better make nice or they will vote against us.'" Now, he said, Republicans are voicing their immigration concerns. They know their own constituents are unhappy. "Now it's a matter of tone."

More than 26 percent of California's population is foreign born, according to the 2000 census. The number is 36.2 percent in Los Angeles County. There simply is nothing to be gained by ranting against immigration in a way that is



perceived as hostile to immigrants. But that doesn't mean Californians must ignore the immigration issue.

Many of my immigrant neighbors and friends agree with me on the matter. Many immigrants who came to this country the legal way are unhappy about granting special status to those who break the nation's immigration laws. Many immigrants, legal and illegal, are starting to understand how uncontrolled immigration depresses their incomes by boosting the supply of low-wage workers. And Prop. 187 is not necessarily the kiss of political death, even among Latino voters. (In overwhelmingly Latino Santa Ana, voters recalled a Latino rabble-rouser from the school board and replaced him with a Republican who had supported Prop. 187.)

The Southern California Association of Governments recently released a report showing that the Greater Los Angeles area has lost ground in comparison to other major metropolitan areas in terms of income, housing affordability, congestion, pollution, and other quality-of-life issues. A key reason is mass immigration. As the report's executive summary gently explained, "Southern California experienced a 1.5-million net domestic out-migration during the last decade, the largest in our region's history. During the same period, the region added 1.5 million foreign immigrants. When compared with the domestic out-migrants and the general population, recent immigrants are, on average, less educated, earn lower incomes, live in larger households and rely significantly on rental housing."

Thanks in large part to the president, California Republicans no longer have to be fearful about making similar points. ■

*Steven Greenhut is a senior editorial writer and columnist for The Orange County Register in Santa Ana, Calif.*

# From A Dead Racist

What if America had wanted to reinforce inequality?

**By Fred Reed**

*The following is a letter recently found in the attic of a building that once served as headquarters of the American Nazi Party. The author, though unknown to me, is clearly a racist of the vilest sort. We may profit by understanding the mind of such a man.*

From: George Rockwell

Date: May 6, 1955

To: James Braswell, Grand Klagon,  
Knights of the Invisible Empire,  
Ku Klux Klan

Dear Klagon Braswell,

In answer to your concern about preventing the rise of the Negro race after the disastrous Supreme Court decision of last year, I am somewhat more optimistic than you. I believe that, by judicious policy, we can, if not eliminate the problem of Negroes, at least control it.

We cannot place hope in extermination or deportation of Negroes *en masse*, nor is there real hope of the reinstitution of slavery. The public mood will not now countenance such measures. We need rather a means of subjugating the Negro race while appearing to have other ends in mind. Fortunately, I believe that it can be done. Permit me to suggest a plan.

First, the thorough demoralization of Negroes is essential. They must be made dependent on Whites, and then persuaded that they cannot achieve anything of worth on their own.

I believe this end may best be accomplished by instituting an all-encompassing system of public welfare. As you know, many Negroes now live in a state

of poverty. We must argue in Congress that decency requires the provision of federal payments to allow Negroes to live at a fit standard. The economy is growing at such a rate that the country can carry the burden without undue difficulty. We should stress the benefits for the children, as this invariably evokes a favorable response.

Once welfare has been instituted, I believe that it will come to be accepted as normal by Whites, and then forgotten. After Negroes have been for several generations dependent on the largesse of Whites, they will, having had no experience of self-sufficiency, lose all initiative.

However, welfare alone will prove ineffective. The next step will be to destroy all social structure among Negroes. The most we could hope for—dare we dream?—would be to frame the welfare laws in such a way that married Negro women could not receive aid. The result, if luck held, would be a sharp rise in illegitimacy. The women would not be able to raise their offspring well, and these in turn would produce further young out of wedlock.

We must strive to make universal illegitimacy seem a natural condition. Crime and further demoralization will assuredly follow.

The third essential step will be to ensure that Negroes receive as little education as possible, though of course we cannot phrase our intentions this way. Fortunately Negroes now have little tradition of academic endeavor. It may be hoped, and even expected, that if we

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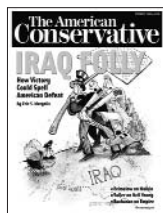
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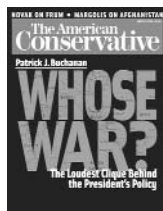
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provide them with poor schools, they will, having no experience of true education, not demand better.

Next, we must at all costs ensure that Negroes not learn Standard English. A Negro who speaks intelligible and grammatical English is likely to be accepted socially by Whites. The consequences would be incalculable. We must encourage the notion that the degraded English now spoken by Negroes is in fact a real language, to be conserved and cherished.

A grave problem is that there will inevitably arise among Negroes men of intelligence and determination who will endeavor to elevate the station of their people. These men will be very dangerous. We can better thwart them, not by opposition, which would harden their determination, but by inviting them into White society, feting them, and making much of them in the public prints. Vanity and privilege will emasculate them, while making other Negroes believe that their race commands esteem among the better classes of Whites.

In order to accomplish all of this, we must have the support of much of the public, and of influential institutions, particularly the press. I believe it is possible. We must argue, as noted above, that welfare is the road of compassion and appeal endlessly to warm feelings unaccompanied by thought. The elites of the White world crave a sense of helping the downtrodden. They do not, however, want to make difficult decisions.

Those who question any of our programs must be ruthlessly portrayed as being hard-hearted, motivated by cupidity, and filled with loathing of our African population. If we can somehow associate our opponents with Nazis, we will succeed so much the better.

The withholding of education is crucial. We cannot of course argue that Negroes need or deserve poor schools. However, the privileged of the nation transparently believe that Negroes are

inferior to the other races, but do not have the self-awareness to see that they believe it. They will fall easy prey to reasoning that avoids placing any expectations on Negroes other than those of continued helplessness. We must provide the privileged with excuses for doing this.

For example, we should argue that requiring Negro students to learn grammar and mathematics constitutes a racially arrogant imposition of European culture. Because pampered Whites do not think Negroes able to succeed, they will, given any excuse at all, favor the lowering of standards in Negro schools. They will then censor any who point to failure and thus, by hiding it, ensure its perpetuation.

Finally we need to engender among the well-off and the press a visceral intolerance of any policies toward Negroes other than ours. The attitude we need to inculcate among reporters, who fortunately are not very intelligent, is that if you don't agree with the means to a high-sounding end, then you disagree with the high-sounding end. Intolerance fortified by righteousness is invincible.

You may find this an excessively optimistic program. No. If we can carry it off, I say to you that in the year 2000 Negroes will be concentrated in urban ghettos, speak English barely comprehensible to Whites, live in shameless bastardry, and be so devoid of both schooling and self-respect as to be without hope of advancement.

Trust me. All things are possible with enlightened social policy.

Yours in hope,  
George

*OK, OK, Rockwell didn't really write this letter. But couldn't he have? ■*

*Fred Reed's writing has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Harper's, and National Review, among other places.*

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

*[Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter ... and Spring]*

### The Five Seasons

By Steve Sailer

A POPULAR FAVORITE on the film festival circuit, "Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter ... and Spring" is a quiet, exquisite-looking South Korean movie about a modern Buddhist monk's surprisingly lurid life on his floating mini-monastery. It opens in Los Angeles and New York on April 2 and should eventually play in art houses nationwide.

Filmed at tree-rimmed Jusan Pond in mountainous Juwangsang National Park, the only sets are the hermitage-on-a-raft, an ornate gatehouse on the shore, and the rowboat that connects them. Most Buddhist monasteries in Korea are hidden away amidst picturesque crags because the Confucianism-espousing Choson dynasty that came to power six centuries ago drove organized Buddhism out of the cities and villages.

G.K. Chesterton pointed out in "Orthodoxy," "No two ideals could be more opposite than a Christian saint in a Gothic cathedral and a Buddhist saint in a Chinese temple .... The Buddhist saint [sculpture] has a sleek and harmonious body, but his eyes are heavy and sealed with sleep. The mediaeval saint's body is wasted to its crazy bones, but his eyes are frightfully alive." Meditation, though,

is notoriously un-cinematic, so writer-director Ki-duk Kim injects a fair dose of worldly action.

He structured his film like Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons." It begins in flowery spring with the protagonist as a child-monk bored by all the serenity. With boyish cruelty, he ties stones to a fish, a frog, and a snake. When he wakes up, he finds that his mentor, the old monk (who bears a disconcerting resemblance to Billy Crystal), has tied a heavy, lesson-teaching rock to him.

In the next segment, it's high summer at the two-man temple and the young monk is now 17. A woman drops off for some spiritual healing her ill daughter, who is pallid but still movie-starlet beautiful. The lad has never laid eyes on a girl before, but he likes what he sees. His initial approaches are dorkiness personified, but eventually he gives her some of that old Marvin Gaye-style sexual healing, which puts the glow back in her cheeks after weeks of contemplating the universe had failed.

Finding them entwined in the rowboat, the old monk says that it's only natural. Celibacy, not chastity, is what's important: the problem with lust, he explains, is that it awakens the desire to possess, which leads to ... murder! (My wife whispered, "This whole monk thing is just a fear of commitment.") The young monk stubbornly rejects the wisdom of his teacher, and rows off to join his girlfriend in the outside world.

One colorful fall, 13 and a quarter years later, he paddles back, a wanted man. Sure enough, he murdered his wife when she ran off with another man. The old monk paints 200 square feet of Prajnaparamita sutras on the raft's floor and sets him to work carving them out. Two

armed detectives appear, but they let him toil in expiation all night, and then haul him off to the hoosegow. The old monk peacefully rows out into the lake, covers his face with paper, sets himself on fire, and turns into a snake. Don't ask me to explain.

In the single most beautiful portion of the film (and that's saying a lot), the now middle-aged man (played here by director Kim—in fact, three of the four actors are named "Kim") returns to the frozen lake and the abandoned monastery. While American jailbirds pump iron, Korean cons evidently master the martial arts, as our hero practices his impressive leaping kicks on the ice, shirtless. The contrast between this religion from tropical India and its Korean adherents, their very bodies molded by Ice Ages past, becomes almost palpable.

Then, a masked woman leaves him a baby boy, and the great cycle begins again.

"Spring, Summer ..." is certainly distinctive and memorable, although it is so symmetrical that some might find it a bit contrived. Others might find their minds wandering to less spiritual questions, such as: how do you get ashore during the shoulder seasons, when the ice is too thin for walking and too thick for rowing?

And what are the economics of the hermit business? Apparently, they're rather lucrative, as the late Nineties saw two major street melees in Korea between hundreds of steel-pipe-swinging monks representing two factions battling for control of the wealthy monasteries. That would make an equally fascinating, but very different, movie. ■

Rated R for some strong sexuality.



# The Making of J.R.R. Tolkien

By Joseph Pearce

*The Lord of the Rings* has truly become a cultural phenomenon. Throughout the 1990s the book was voted “the greatest work of the twentieth century” in several major opinion polls. Now, in the opening years of the 21st century, the movie adaptation has swept the Oscars. More people than ever are reading the epic saga or watching it at movie theatres. The appetite for Middle-earth appears to be insatiable, so much so that characters such as Frodo, Gandalf, and Aragorn have become household names.

But what of the man who created these characters? What of the quiet and unassuming Oxford professor and lifelong practicing Catholic whose gargantuan imagination brought the world of Middle-earth to life? What of J.R.R. Tolkien, the man behind *The Lord of the Rings*?

Although Peter Jackson, the director of the film adaptation, was gracious enough to state that he owed his Oscar-winning triumph to Tolkien as the imaginative genius who made the films possible, it seems that the author of *The Lord of the Rings* is all too often forgotten amidst the hero-worship of his heroes. Peter Jackson, Liv Tyler, Vigo Mortensen, Elijah Wood, and the rest of the movie cast have basked in Tolkien’s reflected glory for long enough. It is time for them to stand aside and for the author himself to take center stage.

J.R.R. Tolkien was born in Bloemfontein, South Africa on Jan. 3, 1892 of English parents. Shortly after his third birthday, his mother returned to England, taking Tolkien and his younger brother, Hilary, with her. Her husband, unable to vacate his post as manager of the Bloemfontein branch of the Bank of Africa was forced to remain behind,

intending to follow his wife and children to England as soon as the opportunity arose. In fact, he contracted rheumatic fever and died before he was able to do so. He was buried in the Anglican graveyard at Bloemfontein, 5,000 miles from hearth and home.

Her husband’s death left Mabel Tolkien in straitened circumstances, forcing her to fall back on the charitable assistance of her relatives. In June 1900, she was received into the Catholic Church, a decision that brought down the family’s wrath. Much of the financial assistance was discontinued in an effort to force her to relinquish her newfound faith. Although her conversion had plunged her and her children from a position of poverty to that of penury, she resolutely refused to abandon her religious beliefs in return for material gain. Instead, and in spite of renewed opposition from family members, she began to instruct her sons in the Catholic religion. Four years later, Mabel Tolkien died, apparently from complications arising from diabetes. She had lived 34 trouble-filled years.

Tolkien, orphaned at 12 years old, remained convinced throughout the whole of his life that his mother’s untimely death was caused by the persecution she suffered after becoming a Catholic.

Nine years after her death he wrote, “My own dear mother was a martyr indeed, and it was not to everybody that

When I think of my mother’s death ... worn out with persecution, poverty, and, largely consequent, disease, in the effort to hand on to us small boys the Faith, and remember the tiny bedroom she shared with us in rented rooms in a postman’s cottage at Rednal, where she died alone, too ill for viaticum, I find it very hard and bitter, when my children stray away.

As his words illustrate, Tolkien remained a devout Catholic throughout his life and, in spite of the lament for his children’s lukewarmness, three of four remained true to the Faith, one of them, John, becoming a Jesuit priest.

Tolkien’s own faith was, as he himself confessed, the most important influence upon his work. “*The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision,” he would write in 1953.

Following Mabel Tolkien’s death, Father Francis Morgan of the Birmingham Oratory became legal guardian to Tolkien and his brother. He became a surrogate father to the two orphaned boys so that Tolkien would describe him later as “a guardian who had been a father to me, more than most real fathers.”

In June 1915, he achieved First Class Honors in English Language and Literature from Oxford University, the first significant milestone on his brilliant aca-

**TOLKIEN’S OWN FAITH WAS, AS HE HIMSELF CONFESSED, THE MOST IMPORTANT INFLUENCE UPON HIS WORK.**

God grants so easy a way to his great gifts as he did to Hilary and myself, giving us a mother who killed herself with labour and trouble to ensure us keeping the faith.” In old age he contrasted his mother’s sacrifices with the complacency of some of his own children towards the faith they had inherited from her:

demical career at Oxford as a philologist and expert in Anglo-Saxon. He would later refer to his academic vocation as one of the “significant facts, which *have* some relation” to his work, stating that his academic pursuits had affected his “taste in languages” and that this was “obviously a large ingredient in *The Lord of the Rings*.”

On March 22, 1916 Tolkien married his childhood sweetheart, Edith Bratt, and two months later left for what he described as the “carnage” and the “animal horror” of the Battle of the Somme, surely one of the most brutal bloodbaths in human history. Although Tolkien was at pains to insist that his war experience was not a major influence upon *The Lord of the Rings*, and

embrace of Christianity in 1931. Furthermore, Tolkien’s influential presence is patently perceptible in much of Lewis’s finest work, particularly in *Till We Have Faces*, the space trilogy, and the *Chronicles of Narnia*.

Tolkien began work in earnest on *The Lord of the Rings* during the dark years of the Second World War, and there is perhaps an element of irony that the war

Tolkien was still working on *The Lord of the Rings* when the world lurched uncertainly from World War to Cold War and, as such, there is more than a hint of Orwellian chill in the air of Middle-earth. It is, for instance, intriguing that the *palantir* stones, the seeing stones employed by Sauron, the Dark Lord, to broadcast propaganda and sow the seeds of despair amongst his enemies, are uncannily similar in their mode of employment to the latest technology in mass communications media. It is even more intriguing once one realizes that *palantir* translates from the elvish as *television*!

More perceptive than most, Tolkien had prophesied the future of globalization as early as 1943, opining about the likely triumph of Mammon over Marx in a letter to his son.

I wonder (if we survive this war) if there will be any niche, even of suffering, left for reactionary back numbers like me (and you). The bigger things get the smaller and duller or flatter the globe gets. It is going to be all one blasted little provincial suburb. When they have introduced American sanitation, morale-pep, feminism, and mass production throughout the Near East, Middle East, Far East, U.S.S.R., the Pampas, el Gran Chaco, the Danubian basin, Equatorial Africa, Hither Further and Inner Mumbo-land, Gondhwana-land, Lhasa, and the villages of darkest Berkshire, how happy we shall be. At any rate it ought to cut down travel. There will be nowhere to go. So people will (I opine) go all the faster .... But seriously: I do find this Americo-cosmopolitanism very terrifying.

Perhaps it is more than a little encouraging that a work by a self-confessed “reactionary back number” should emerge as the most popular and influential work of literature of the 20th century, continuing to win converts to its wisdom and charm 50 years after it was first published. Tolkien was certainly

**IN A LETTER TO HIS SON: I WONDER (IF WE SURVIVE THIS WAR) IF THERE WILL BE ANY NICHE, EVEN OF SUFFERANCE, LEFT FOR REACTIONARY BACK NUMBERS LIKE ME (AND YOU). THE BIGGER THINGS GET THE SMALLER AND DULLER OR FLATTER THE GLOBE GETS. IT IS GOING TO BE ALL ONE BLASTED LITTLE PROVINCIAL SUBURB.**

although some critics have indeed over-emphasized its influence, there is little doubt that his experience of the “animal horror” darkened his vision to such an extent that the shadow of the First World War always lingers, vulture-like, over his work. In particular, he retained a horror of the new weapons of mass destruction, crafted by sin-stained minds, with which men now killed each other with blood-lustful abandon. Machine guns and mustard gas became a metaphor for the mindless application of new technology, the triumph of the machine over humanity.

In the years between the two world wars Tolkien befriended other like-minded academics, most notably C.S. Lewis, with whom he formed probably the most important literary relationship of the 20th century. Lewis was “a great encourager” of Tolkien’s embryonic efforts at myth creation, and Tolkien confessed on one occasion that he might never have finished *The Lord of the Rings* if Lewis had not been there to cajole him to continue. Similarly there is little doubt that Tolkien was the greatest single influence on Lewis’s own literary oeuvre. Tolkien’s philosophy of myth, by which Tolkien explained the deep-rooted relationship between God’s Creation and human “sub-creation,” constituted the final *coup de grace* in Lewis’s

in which Tolkien did not fight is more potently present in his magnum opus than the war in which he did. It is indeed no coincidence that Sauron has been thought to represent Josef Stalin, who was described by Tolkien in 1943 as “that bloodthirsty old murderer,” and Mordor, by implication, to represent the Soviet Union. Similarly, Saruman has been said to represent Hitler, and Isengard, with its racially charged emblem of the White Hand, to represent the Third Reich. “I have spent most of my life ... studying Germanic matters,” Tolkien wrote to one of his sons in 1941, adding that he knew “better than most what is the truth about this ‘Nordic’ nonsense.” The result was that he had “in this War a burning private grudge ... against that ruddy little ignoramus Adolf Hitler” adding with considerable significance considering Hitler’s personification as Saruman in *The Lord of the Rings* that Hitler’s ideology was the result of “demonic inspiration and impetus.” In this light, Saruman’s scoffing dismissal of the difference between white and black, i.e. good and evil, declaring himself no longer Saruman the White but Saruman the many-colored, is a clear allusion to the Nietzschean boast that the “wise” must go “beyond good and evil,” a boast that lay, and lied, at the cankered heart of the Third Reich.

bemused and pleasantly surprised by the phenomenal international success of *The Lord of the Rings*, and he never came to terms with the fame it brought him. In retirement he shied away from the publicity that the bestseller status of his books brought him, guarding his and his wife's privacy from the encroachments of fandom.

In 1969, when Tolkien was 77 years old and living in sedate retirement on England's south coast, he received a letter from his publisher's daughter asking him, as part of a school project, "What is the purpose of life?" His reply serves to illustrate that his priorities in life were a faithful reflection of the priorities that are all-pervasive in his books. In his life, as in his work, the most important things were "fundamentally religious and Catholic":

So it may be said that the chief purpose of life, for any one of us, is to increase according to our capacity our knowledge of God by all the means we have, and to be moved by it to praise and thanks. To do as we say in the 'Gloria in Excelsis': *Laudamus te, benedicamus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te, gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam*. We praise you, we call you holy, we worship you, we proclaim your glory, we thank you for the greatness of your splendour.

And in moments of exaltation we may call on all created things to join in our chorus, speaking on their behalf, as is done in Psalm 148, and in The Song of the Three Children in Daniel II. PRAISE THE LORD ... all mountains and hills, all orchards and forests, all things that creep and birds on the wing. ■

*Joseph Pearce is author of Tolkien: Man and Myth and editor of Tolkien: A Celebration. He is Writer in Residence of Ave Maria University in Naples, Fla. and is editor of the Saint Austin Review (StAR), a trans-Atlantic journal of Christian culture.*

## BOOKS

[*The American Way: Family and Community in the Shaping of the American Identity*, Allan Carlson, ISI Books, 211 pages]

### From the Hearth

By John Zmirak

WHERE DID AMERICA go wrong? How did our country fall under the sway of social mores and patterns of life that would have been unrecognizable to our grandparents and sickening to the Founders? Different answers arise depending on your diagnosis of what exactly was special about the country in the first place. Is the problem the rise of big government? The displacement of European culture as the dominant social force? The suicide of the WASPs? The new "culture of death" that subordinates altruism to hedonism, discarding the moral norms essential to any sustainable society?

To Reagan conservatives, libertarians, and most members of the Old Right, America's wrong turn occurred somewhere in the New Deal, with its unprecedented expansion of government involvement in the everyday conduct of American life. Southern conservatives trace the decline of American liberty to the fall of the Confederacy, arguing that the destruction of real local power to resist the federal government made inevitable the Leviathan state and the degradation of public life into squabbles over the spoils of massive, unjust taxation. (Samuel Francis aptly dubs the outcome "anarcho-tyranny," a situation in which the federal government mandates smoke-free public schools and equal athletic spending for the sexes but dares not control its international borders.)

Catholic traditionalists, who attribute the dissipation of moral certainty to the

heritage of the Enlightenment and the Reformation, go back a little further—for instance, to 1761, which marked the British defeat of the French. And neoconservatives, of course, blame the 1960s, which saw the corruption of the Civil Rights movement as it retreated from its morally grounded demand for equal opportunities and became a permanent force for social revolution through activist government. However justified its original claims, that crusade served as the template for an endless succession of "liberation" movements conducted on the behalf of self-designated victim groups—first spoiled suburban women, then flagrant homosexuals, now illegal immigrants—against the interests and preferences of the normative culture.

There's truth in each of these diagnoses and a broad agreement to disagree once constituted the unspoken code of civility that made it possible for movement conservatism to flourish. The fissures within that coalition, as is well known, broke into schisms with the collapse of communism as a contrary force. Now that we have nothing in particular to oppose—unless you think we can unite the country by chasing the specter of "terrorism," or persecuting a billion-man world religion, Islam—around what rallying point can diversified, secularized Americans unite?

Similar questions have faced thoughtful Americans before, as Allan Carlson shows in *The American Way*—a concise, immensely readable book that examines important episodes in the search for an American self-definition since 1900. At that time, Carlson notes, the country still faced the immense challenge of assimilating tens of millions of immigrants who did not hail from the Northern European, Protestant countries that had settled the 13 colonies. The United States at one point during the Industrial Revolution needed strong backs and thick arms to tame and man a thinly populated continent. But the influx of Italian, Irish, Jewish, and other Eastern European migrants seemed to threaten the common mores that had united the nascent American Republic.



According to Carlson, even the presence of millions of thrifty, industrious Germans posed a problem to the Anglophone, low-church Protestant American consensus—particularly once Imperial Germany began to threaten British dominance in Europe.

With great affection, Carlson details the vast network of social, religious, and charitable organizations created by German immigrants across the U.S.

## THE FAMILY BECAME THE CENTERPIECE OF AMERICA'S SELF-DEFINITION.

before 1900, associations that could serve as a model for anyone who prefers private, faith-based initiatives to statist bureaucracy as the means for addressing poverty and the displacements endemic to a market economy. Carlson relates how virtually all these organizations moved away from the narrow ethnic particularism that might have attended their creation to search for the common premises that their migrant members shared with native-born Americans. They located these shared values in the sanctity of the family—and in so doing laid the groundwork for a powerful ethic of domesticity, centered on a gainfully employed father, a prudent, strong, nurturing mother, and children reared close to the maternal bosom to love God, country, and family.

This domestic ethic, Carlson shows, became the common denominator on which most Americans could agree—repressing, at least for a time, the individualist dynamic promoted by American capitalism and encouraged by its religious and political heritage. To borrow Marx's cynical phrase, the "holy family," rather than the sovereign individual, became the centerpiece of America's self-definition; this institution crossed ethnic, political, and religious lines, providing for many decades the rationales for domestic and even foreign policy. For Carlson, collapse of this moral consensus, more than any other single factor, is responsible for America's current social pathologies.

Carlson follows the progress of what we might call this "ideology of the hearth" through the 20th century. He shows how it inspired Theodore Roosevelt—himself a passionate opponent of "hyphenated Americanism"—to reject the eugenic and racist views of "Anglo-Saxon" or "Nordicist" American nationalists. If arriving immigrants could sever their ties of political loyalty to foreign lands and keep their family

earning, intact, "patriarchal" family. Restrictions on women's and child labor, Carlson documents, were inspired and implemented largely by elite, high-minded women who had pioneered private charities organized to help impoverished immigrants assimilate. Their initiatives to "Americanize" immigrants gave first priority to eliminating social pathologies such as alcoholism, illegitimacy, domestic abuse, and childhood malnutrition. Their large-scale success helped empty the slums and create the American middle class. These benevolent ladies faced two sources of opposition in their time: the early "equity" feminists who sought to abolish any legal distinction in the status of the sexes, and business lobbyists such as the National Association of Manufacturers, who sought cheap labor at any social cost.

These mostly Protestant "maternalist" social thinkers found their views strongly echoed by the Catholic leaders of their day—who tried to infuse economic reforms with their Church's social teaching. Roosevelt's administration even responded to the concerns of the Agrarians, setting up pilot programs to re-settle the urban poor on subsistence farms and prevent the consolidation of agricultural land in the hands of the few. Most of these initiatives did not involve massive government meddling

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in people's everyday lives; the real growth of Leviathan came with the vast rearmament and bureaucratic mobilization brought on by America's intervention in World War II, made permanent by the demands of the Cold War. The needs of war trumped all.

For the first two decades of that protracted confrontation with communism, however, the vision of American domesticity still served as the locus of loyalty in the rhetoric of politicians and the calculations of policy-makers. Carlson offers a fascinating exploration of Henry Luce and his valiant attempt in the pages of *Life* magazine to create a visible embodiment of the virtuous, prosperous, enduring American family, even as its cohesiveness was slowly under erosion by the very consumerism and individualism encouraged by unprecedented wealth. Carlson unearths sober analyses by Cold War theorists who examined the implications for national security of threats to domestic harmony, such as "juvenile delinquency." How quaint a phrase that seems today, it is melancholy to reflect.

Poignantly, Carlson shows the legislative moment when the maternalist idea

and the pro-family policies it had supported were driven from the public square. By way of bitter irony, it was conservative Southerners who were responsible. In a last-ditch attempt to derail the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Carlson relates, die-hard legislators inserted language forbidding sex discrimination into the Act—thinking that they'd thereby made it so unpalatable it would sink from sight. Instead, the bill sailed through Congress and in a single stroke rendered illegal every attempt to provide a workingman with a "family wage" that would enable his wife to rear her children at home. Henceforth—with the industrious aid of a reborn feminist movement—the preservation of the family would no longer be the goal of government policy. Indeed, the very definition of "family" would decay into meaninglessness, to the point where today it can equally refer to single mothers, lesbians made parents by artificial insemination, and two-income suburban households along with their hired surrogate mother. While Carlson does not pretend that all these social changes flowed from a single law, or even from the actions of the government more broadly, he shows the profoundly corrosive influence of the raft of equality laws and court decisions following upon the 1964 Act, which collectively led the state to regard each citizen as an atom, a locus of taxation or subsidies buffeted by market forces and fluctuating values, spinning through a chaotic social void.

Our attempts to reconstruct society—sometimes, it seems, from scratch—must be informed by the history Carlson records. One obvious policy implication presents itself: if the successful absorption of millions of poor immigrants early in the last century was only made possible by a vigorous, popular, state-sanctioned movement to reinvigorate the patriarchal family, what on earth will assimilate them now? ■

*John Zmirak, author of Wilhelm Röpke: Swiss Localist, Global Economist, is Senior Editor of Faith & Family magazine.*

[*No Crueler Tyrannies: Accusation, False Witness, and Other Terrors of Our Times*, Dorothy Rabinowitz, *Wall Street Journal Books*, 239 pages]

## An Inquisition for the Children

by Marian Kester Coombs

THIS BOOK HAS GONE to paper only one year after its publication by Wall Street Journal Books, a Simon & Schuster imprint. It recounts cases of judicial and prosecutorial misconduct so extreme as to defy belief. But what is judged believable or unbelievable lies at the heart of the whole matter. For elucidating and forever changing our beliefs about allegations of mass child abuse, author Dorothy Rabinowitz won the Pulitzer Prize in 2001.

Ms. Rabinowitz, a City College- and NYU-educated investigative journalist who has written for the *Wall Street Journal* since 1990, acts as a one-woman truth squad. But even the most piercing of whistles can use amplification, and it was not until Lewis Lapham of *Harper's* proved willing to print the first results of her investigation into the Amirault family case in Massachusetts that the fog of hysteria surrounding such cases began to clear.

It may seem easy to look at the day-care and nursery-school abuse scares that have scarred the American landscape from sea to sea and conclude that their cause is a combination of mass hysteria and bad conscience, i.e., unacknowledged parental guilt at abandoning their children to the care of strangers. But the hallmark of mass hysteria is that virtually everyone is caught up in it before there is time to reflect, and by then much damage has already been done. It also bears remembering that in the 1980s, when these scares began, the popular (and very PC) belief in the infallibility of a woman's or a child's claim to have been victimized

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was at its height. No one wanted to hear, much less go near, the suggestion that “the children” might not be testifying truthfully in cases of abuse.

In an interview with Brian Lamb on C-SPAN’s “Booknotes” (May 4, 2003), Ms. Rabinowitz noted, “You know, as soon as there was an accusation in the early ’80s, you did not have reporters going around saying, ‘Hey, maybe this isn’t true.’ What you had was night after night after night on television about the poor children and the ‘monsters.’”

Ms. Rabinowitz recalls the *frisson* of strangeness she experienced upon hearing one of the first nursery-terror accusations—that of a 26-year-old woman in New Jersey whose name will not be abused again by appearing in print here. She remembers thinking how extremely odd and unlikely were the woman’s alleged crimes—which also don’t bear repeating. But it was not until she heard about the Amiraults in Malden, Massachusetts, that what she calls “the moral significance” of the almost certainly false accusations was brought home to her.

As she probed these cases and others, she found that each followed a similar pattern: the lone parental accuser, like the proverbial tongue setting fire to the forest. The police who acted first and asked questions later, if at all. The communication of urgent alarm to the rest of the parents *en bloc*. The coaching of parents in what to look for in their children’s behavior. The interviewing of children by child-abuse experts to determine what they would later testify to having endured: evil clowns, secret rooms, magic drinks, animal torture. The grandstanding of the prosecutors. The harsh sentence, trumpeted by the triumphant prosecution as a victory for innocents everywhere.

Ms. Rabinowitz discovered, first, that for these child-abuse “experts” the most devastating proof that abuse had occurred was the child’s repeated denial that any abuse had taken place. She also discovered that the behaviors parents were told to look for were so general as to be diagnostically meaningless: refusal to eat peanut butter or tuna fish, bed-

wetting, nightmares, “changes in behavior.” (If there is one constant in the behavior of a five-year-old, it is change.) Ms. Rabinowitz further discovered, by gaining access to sealed transcripts of recorded interviews, that the children came in with no clue as to what the charges were supposed to be against their teachers. The charges, virtually word for word, were supplied by the expert interviewer in the course of a skillful Q&A that would initially elicit puzzled denials and finally lead to the desired acquiescence.

The experts’ own sick preoccupations are shockingly evident from these transcripts—if one is allowed to read them—which is why juries never saw them. An excerpt included in the book:

EXPERT: Was this a real elephant or somebody dressed up as an elephant?

CHILD: Somebody dressed up.

EXPERT: Was it a man or lady dressed up like an elephant?

CHILD: It was a lady dressed like an elephant.

EXPERT: Was it a NAKED elephant, did you say?

CHILD: [draws a blank]

EXPERT: What was the elephant doing?

CHILD: Just standing.

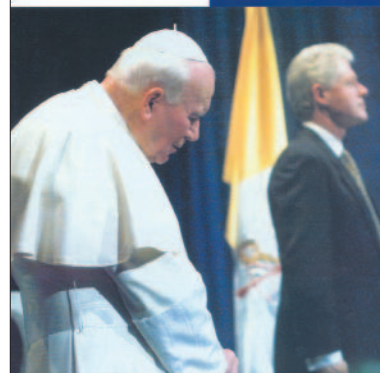
EXPERT: Oh, really. Were any of the private parts showing on the elephant?

CHILD: [draws a blank]

The author began writing about the case of Violet, Gerald, and Cheryl Amirault in 1995, after the two women had already served six years and Gerald had served eight for abusing scores of young pupils at the family’s upscale day school. Within a couple of months of her first *Wall Street Journal* article, Violet and Cheryl were released on a plea, although they were later re-incarcerated for a time. Gerald remained behind bars—where he remains yet.

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*No Crueler Tyrannies'* account of what Violet Amirault, then more than 60 years old, her just-married daughter Cheryl, and her son Gerald—who has missed his three children's entire childhood—have gone through at the hands of the state's "protective" apparatus is frankly terrifying and cannot be publicized enough. With not one iota of physical evidence for it and with the entire weight of reason against it, three blameless citizens were convicted of unspeakable acts and cast into nightmarish prison conditions. It is significant that the court responsible for prolonging their agony—the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court of recent "gay marriage" infamy—was established to put an end to the Salem witch trials. In his 1841 classic *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, Charles MacKay explored several dozen "moral epidemics" over the course of human history, and still managed to conclude, "The man now who imagines himself a wolf is sent to the hospital instead of to the stake, as in the days of the witch mania; and earth, air and sea are unpeopled of the grotesque spirits that

like the child-abuse scandals, complete suspension of disbelief still sets in among us periodically, and ordinary causality, logic, probability, rules of evidence, fair play, and common sense simply fly out the window. "War fever" also follows the same manic course. And when the bubble or fever or hysteria finally exhausts itself, people still wonder, dazed, what on earth happened.

The most moving parts of the book reveal the human cost of these anything but ludicrous trials: the young New Jersey teacher, her intelligence frayed daily by the idiocy of prison life. The inmates spitting on Cheryl and Violet Amirault and leaving the table whenever they sat down. Violet's death, hastened by the ruination of the beautiful life she'd built. But later: the inmates "roaring in exultation" as the exonerated Cheryl walks out of prison for the last time. And the dreaded day her new employers find out who she is—and tell her they are "proud to have her as an employee."

The message of *No Crueler Tyrannies* is that if the state can do such things to these people, it can do them to

still in prison because the state of Massachusetts won't let him go because of the 'integrity' of their case—he represents their 'victory.'"

"I could not have done it [spent so much time on these investigations] without being impelled by pure rage," Ms. Rabinowitz went on. "Of all of the emotions that you have, pity, it's not that, and you're not thinking of the victims. You're not thinking of poor Gerald .... That's behind you. What you're thinking about is the prosecutor. What you're thinking about is the totalitarian nature of this enterprise."

In the author's view, we are essentially getting what we paid for: you can't place what amounts to a bounty on a certain category of criminal, give bonuses for convictions, permit the creation of an unaccountable class of self-styled "experts," and turn winning prosecutors into popular heroes without engendering a "win at all costs" ethic. There was also a price to be paid for the *faux-naïf* notion that "children never lie." We have come a long way since the 1980s, and one thing we have all learned the hard way is that children *do* lie. They are in fact very good liars, because they still make only primitive distinctions between fantasy and reality, and because they are "gay and innocent and heartless," as J.M. Barrie observed in *Peter Pan*. They will lie to please an adult, they will lie to escape punishment, they will lie just because they like the sound of it; the one thing they won't lie about is whether they think you look ugly or fat.

When the incredible is believed and the believable discredited, the challenge is to explain how such an inversion could take place. This Dorothy Rabinowitz has done and continues to do in her examinations of other charges, e.g., that of Juanita Broadrick against Bill Clinton. (That one she finds credible.) She has trained empathy, anger, and an ordered intelligence upon our follies, and found truths that have set innocent people free. ■

*Marian Kester Coombs writes from Crofton, Md.*

WITH NOT ONE IOTA OF **PHYSICAL EVIDENCE** FOR IT AND WITH THE ENTIRE  
WEIGHT OF REASON AGAINST IT, **THREE BLAMELESS CITIZENS** WERE CONVICTED  
OF UNSPEAKABLE ACTS AND CAST INTO **NIGHTMARISH PRISON CONDITIONS**.

were once believed to haunt them."

Unfortunately those "grotesque spirits" have just been reincarnated in modern forms, the better to loathe them by. Crowd characteristics, so vividly described by Gustave Le Bon in the late 19th century, have not departed from modern man by any means; two of the most durable are "excessive suggestibility" and "the prodigious perversions that events undergo in the imagination of a throng." Both in the case of speculative bubbles—from the Tulip Mania of 17th-century Holland to the dot-com stock market frenzy of 20th-century America—and in the case of mass hysterias

anyone. The book's title comes from Montesquieu: "There is no crueller tyranny than that which is perpetrated under the shield of law and in the name of justice." And in Ms. Rabinowitz's view the most disturbing part of these cases—she details more than six, including the Wenatchee, Washington, travesty of justice that Paul Craig Roberts has also done so much to expose—is the tenacity with which police, "runaway prosecutorial zealots," and judges cling to their shamefully obtained convictions even in the face of overwhelming exculpatory evidence. As she told Brian Lamb, "Gerald Amirault is

# Outsource the Neocons!



While flying back to the good old USA, I read a letter to a newspaper from an Illinois factory worker who had lost his job to some sweatshop out in the Far

East. He told of his efforts to keep some kind of dignity as well as the wolf from his door. The letter was well written, and the writer came through as a decent person who wanted to find work rather than a handout.

Although Pat Buchanan wrote about suicide by free trade in the last issue, a column by George Will compels me to comment further. Here's what he had to say about the perils of protectionism in *Newsweek*: "Protectionism is intellectuals' Louis Vuitton luggage—a luxury for persons comfortably placed in societies with social surpluses so large they can sustain the injuries protectionism does to economic growth."

Who are these purveyors of Louis Vuitton luggage? They turn out to be none other than ordinary American workers who find themselves thrown out of work as a result of being undercut by low-paid workers in Africa and Asia. The latter, poor wretches, are willing and ready to work in sweatshop conditions for \$1 an hour, if that.

"Workers disadvantaged by globalization," Will announces dismissively, "are few but concentrated, attentive and intense." Well, not as intense as George Will gets when face to face with, say, Lally Weymouth or some other hysterical but rich female. The message from Mr. Will is that these people should simply shut the hell up and be a lot more solicitous about the economic well-being of poor African countries, just like he is.

Now of course George couldn't care less about poor Africans. They come in handy in order to make a point but

hardly ever give a chic cocktail party inside the Beltway. But this column is not about Africa. (It would take a *War and Peace*-like opus just to list the murders and thievery of African leaders). It's about American jobs and American workers. And what I'd like to know is whose interests are being protected when corporations close down their factories in the United States and open them in Gabon because labor there is a lot cheaper? Whose interests are being protected when these corporations then re-import these goods into the United States at prices so low that they, in turn, help drive domestic producers out of business? Certainly shareholders do very well out of this. Without any extra work, labor costs are suddenly smaller, profits are larger, and the value of their shares is higher. American workers, on the other hand, are now out of work.

Please don't get me wrong. I'm all for shareholders' profits. I am, after all, the son of a capitalist. But with a difference. My family moolah comes from industries and ships. We created jobs and offered them to Greeks when in Greece, to Sudanese when in the Sudan, and to Americans when in America. We didn't close down factories at home and open them up abroad, like the Heinz corporation does in order to keep John Kerry's wife in the style she's never been accustomed to.

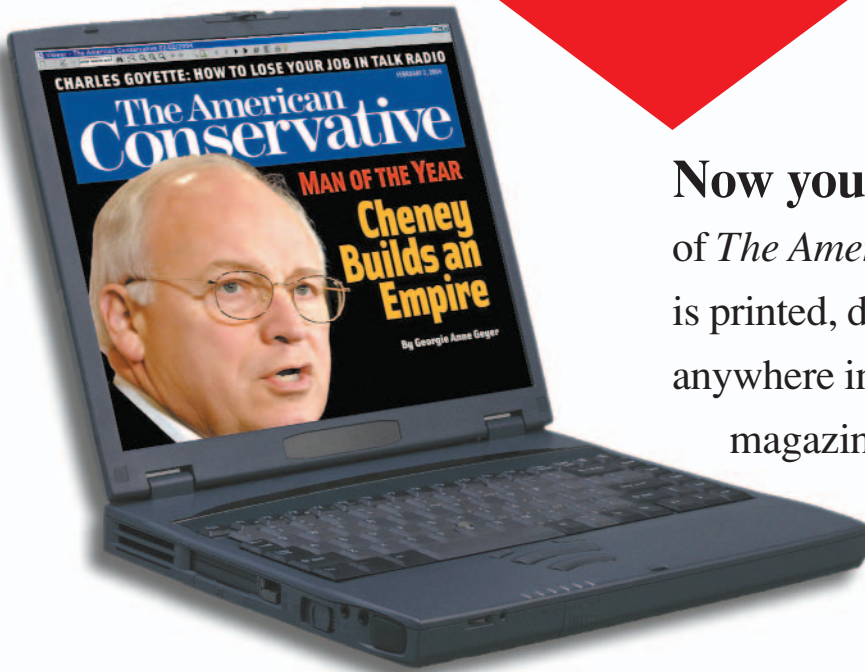
Once upon a time, the state was required to defend the nation's borders as well as the people's jobs. Now the crooks in Washington no longer protect the nation's borders, and the corporate crooks no longer give jobs to Ameri-

cans. What in hell is going on here? I'll tell you. People like George Will, that's what.

As a conservative, I favor social stability over shareholder value. The great bourgeois world of the past was built on families confident that the man of the house would always have a job and that his income would rise slowly but steadily. Nothing guarantees instability so much as unemployment or the fear of unemployment. The Wills of this world fulminate about cosseted Americans and extol the virtues of competition and suggest that there is something elitist and scandalous about wanting to ensure that American workers are not out of work and are paid reasonably. These champions of free trade claim that cheap imports mean cheaper consumer goods, but if people are out of work, they don't have the money to buy these goods. If people's pay is driven down every year because that's the only way that companies are able to compete with Third World sweatshops, then there won't be anyone to buy those cheap cars and DVDs—other than people like George Will who make their money by posturing and posing.

However, I do think free trade is sometimes reasonable. I propose that we outsource George Will, David Frum, and the rest of the neoconservative pack to India. There's probably a sweatshop in Bombay that can churn out neocon drivel at a far brisker pace and for less than 50 cents an hour. Imagine what ABC could do with all that money they would save by no longer paying George Will's exorbitant salary! The unemployed Illinois factory worker cum letter-writer made more sense than the fully employed but pompous George ever did. ■

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